DE RERUM INDICARUM NATURA: EXEMPLA GENTIUM ET SEDITIONUM

THE CONTINENT OF CIRCE

Being an Essay on the Peoples of India by

NIRAD C. CHAUDHURI

'I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions.'

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THE MOTTO

of this series of works is the stirring admonition found in identical words in all the great languages of the Indo-European family:

GNOTHI SEAUTON
NOSCE TE IPSUM
ATMANAM VIDDHI
KNOW THYSELF
CONNAIS-TOI TOI-MEME

Et cetera

This introspection seems to have been looked upon as a duty by the peoples who spoke these languages and whenever they have forgotten it they have also lost their soul.

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IN GRATITUDE

THIS book is an essay in the primary meaning of the word, a trial in exposition which cannot but be sketchy and tentative. Some might consider it only as a trifle. Nevertheless, the acknowledgements I have to make for it are not fewer than those for my ponderous autobiography.

My thanks are due first and foremost to my friend, Khushwant Singh, the well-known Sikh writer, good companion, and man-about-town, for the loan of his portable typewriter. Though it may be said that my mind is 'feudal', my hands at least are of the machine age. I can write only on a typewriter, and mine was worn out. As soon as Khushwant Singh heard that my project of writing this series of works was held up because I could not immediately replace my broken machine, he lent me his own; afterwards he presented me with a brand new portable. He is also the only fellow-Indian (significantly a Sikh, and not a Hindu) who has put in good words for me in print in India. This needed courage.

But living where I live, even in feeling gratitude I cannot get away from *rerum indicarum natura*, one aspect of which is a bizarre duality. I wish I could say that it was a duality in the grand Zoroastrian manner, a secular conflict between Ahriman and Ahura Mazda in which light was bound to triumph over darkness. But the duality of the Hindu existence is like the cat-and-dog life of a maladjusted married couple who can neither separate nor live together. So just when, with the near completion of one of the essays, my gratitude to Khushwant Singh was at its highest I read an account of the loan of the typewriter in a public print. It was contained in an article entitled *An Interview with Khushwant Singh* by an American woman in a magazine which described itself as 'the official publication of the American Women's Club of Delhi'—and in it I read:

Interviewer: 'Who is the best Indian writer today?'
Khushwant Singh (as reported): 'In non-fiction? Without a doubt Nirad Chaudhuri . . . A bitter man, a poor man. He doesn't even own a typewriter. He borrows mine a week at a time.'

I was struck all of a heap. My poverty is, of course, well known in New Delhi and much further afield, and therefore I was not prepared to see it bruited about by so august a body as the American Women's Club of Delhi. Why did the impressive board of twelve American women who were jointly looking after the magazine think it necessary to publish such small talk about a man who was even smaller by their standards, who had neither of the two things they understood and respected: namely, money and official position? Was it because I was a writer? Then I would only lament—

> Why did I write? What sin to me unknown
> Dipt me in ink, my parents' or my own?

Khushwant Singh told me that he had never made the statement in the form and spirit in which it was reproduced, and that he was not even aware of the real intention of the woman he was entertaining at tea. Of course, I took his word for it. But even if in the course of a private conversation he had said all that was reported that would not have made any difference to my affection for him. I tried to show that I bore no grudge by again borrowing the machine after the publication of the article and by most gratefully accepting the present of the new typewriter.*

The conduct of the American women, however, I cannot even now understand unless I attribute it to the sad but inexorable law of the American impingement on Asia that the United States will never export any of its products to the East except those of which every decent American

* Having read Pascal early in life I have always tried to profit by his wisdom: *'Si tous les hommes savaient ce qu'ils disent les uns des autres, il n'y aurait pas quatre amis dans le monde.'*

is ashamed, taken with its complement that in retaliation the East will set its lowest adventures on the distributors of American money. The arrogance of the almsgiver is fitly matched by the impudence of the beggar.

I give one example of the arrogance. When in November, 1962, there were military reverses on the north-east frontier and the Government of India appealed to all and sundry for help, the same American Women's Club thought that it would also make a contribution of money. It did so, but not from its own funds. It held a charity show. What was it do you suppose?—a play, a concert, an art exhibition? No, five days after the day of the worst defeat, a day of national humiliation for us, the Club held a fashion parade, in which some of the women appeared in what to our Hindu eyes looked like underwear. The only consideration shown to Hindu sensibilities in this performance lay in putting the clothes or their absence, not on the scraggy, high cheek-boned, and tousled scare-crows who mannequinize in the West, but on *pina-payodhara* and *prithunitamvini* foreign women. For the rest all Hindu values were ignored. Even the wife of the American Ambassador attended this egregious display of charity. But how can I blame the foreigners when our leaders who not only swear by Gandhian chastity but also practise it even in conjugal life, accepted the money with extended palms?*

But American national projection on the rest of the world is too deep, large, and important a subject to be commented on incidentally. In its irresistible amoral power accompanied by both goodness and vileness on the moral plane, it is bound to continue and grow. Therefore I can take my time to discuss it, and discuss I will. A little will be implied even in this book, but a formal and extended

* If you do not know the meaning of the two Sanskrit phrases, which are important terms in Hindu sexual aesthetics, refer to p. 170, l. 22 infra. As regards chastity I should add that abstention from sexual intercourse in married life is a religious and moral offence in Hindu sacred law. See p. 193 infra. So these Gandhian Hindus are not as Hindu as they think they are.

treatment is reserved for a future work. For the moment let me set down my obligations.

To Cyrus and Ruth Jhabvala I am grateful for providing me with the means of pursuing a creative recreation which refreshes me for work. Theirs is the case of a modern Persian liberating a modern Jewish maiden from her Babylonian exile in London. As a result, they are so happy with their three little rose-of-Sharon-like daughters that they want to make all their friends happy. So, hearing that some of my plants were suffering from the hot winds of Delhi in summer for want of shelter, they presented me with a greenhouse. The happy look of the plants behind the glass since then is like glimpses of his lost home to a man who was born in a land of waters. I have also imbibed a superstitious notion that by trying to acquire green fingers with plants I might develop them for writing. In any case, there is no doubt that contact with living things keeps man's creative spirit alive. The Jhabvalas have also provided me with another such contact by giving me an Alsatian pup.

I have to thank my foreign friends (including good Americans: I have met few finer men and women than they) for giving me opportunities to tidy up my ideas by talking incessantly to them. It is something to be able to talk about India in plain language instead of in jargon, better still to be able to talk to men who will listen instead of continually interjecting 'Great is the Diana of the Ephesians!' and yet finer to be able to talk in loud rustic tones while enjoying a *pot-au-feu* and other good food against a background of tapestries old and new, petit-point hangings, fine china and glass, Louis Quinze and other old furniture, Bartolozzi prints, Dutch flower pieces, and many other lovely things which add graciousness to living. All this enthusiasm in a man who cannot buy a typewriter for want of money will raise many Hindu brows, and provoke smiles in others who are more generous.

It grieves me to think that the friend who indulged me most will not read the pages that follow. He lies buried in the vaults of a chapel in the Isle of France. On one Sunday he had seen the chapel on the estate of a relative and observed, *'On est bien ici;'* the next Tuesday he was struck dead at his desk in Paris. He killed himself by overworking in Delhi. I used to tell him, as I do all my Western friends who take their work over-seriously, 'Count, you Europeans take too much on yourselves in our tropical country.' He would still not spare himself. In India that is not doing one's duty, but committing suicide. This friend did more for me than only offering hospitality. That story will have to be told, and I am sure it will keep our faith in human nature unwavering.

I thank my publishers for helping me with my English. I must repeat that I never learned the language in any English-speaking country or from Englishmen in India. It was learnt in Bengali from Bengali teachers, and till my fifty-third year I did not have, with the exception of relatively long conversations for a period of about one year off and on, enough exchanges of speech with the natural speakers of English which would have added up to five hours in their total duration. But I also wish my publishers to realize the implication of the acknowledgement. All writers, even the best, need the help of the publisher's editor, and we the writers of Babu English need it most. Yet I had been surprised by the absence of any expression of gratitude on this score in the books in English written by Indians. So, in my first two books, I tried to set a different example and make amends for all Indian writers by putting on record what I owed to the publishers. But this has been interpreted in my country, and especially by fellow-Bengalis, to mean that my books were written in the offices of the publishers by their ghosts. The risk even now exists, but I cannot allow it to frighten me from acknowledging my debts.

I can at last record my obligation to Thomas Mark, a former Director of Macmillan, but, alas! I have gained

the freedom to do so only through his death. When he lived he would not allow me to mention his name. Until I saw how he saw a book through the press on behalf of the authors published by Macmillan I had no conception that an editor could bring so much acumen, comprehension, and affection to bear on another man's writings. I shall give only two examples of his meticulousness. In my autobiography I had written about a hussar lashing at Indians with his whip, as represented in a picture in the Victoria Memorial in Calcutta. He commented, 'Very strange, for hussars do not carry whips.' I had the picture checked, and it was found that the horseman was an Indian cavalryman. Again, in my book on England I had written that Gibbon had conceived the idea of writing his great history while sitting on the Capitol and musing *on the ruins of the Forum*. When the proofs came I was at first very much surprised to find the passage altered to 'mused amidst the ruins of the Capitol', for in Gibbon's time there were no ruins on the Capitol. I was going to restore my wording, when it occurred to me that Thomas Mark being Thomas Mark, there must be some good reason behind the change. I took down Gibbon's autobiography, and found the passage to be as Mark had made it. Yet his modesty was amazing, and he was over-generous to my English, never treating it with contempt or condescension as the English 'expert' on India does. I had written of swans (cobs) *busking*. He queried, 'What is this word?' I sent him with the proofs a photograph of an illustration of a swan in that state from an English ornithological book, which bore the caption—'Male Swan Busking'. He wrote back: though he lived at Twickenham close to the Thames, and had been seeing swans all his life, it was curious that he had neither heard nor come upon the word.

I express my gratitude in advance to those who will not treat this book as a work of scholarship, and call me learned. Having tried to acquire learning and failing to

do so, I know who is learned and who is not. I am not. In order to convince the reader that this is not insincerity I shall mention the names of four men whom I regard as truly learned. They are Mommsen, Wilamowitz-Moellendorf, Harnack, and Eduard Meyer. When young and immature I cherished the ambition of being the fifth in that series. So I could not have been very modest. But a standard is a standard.

I shall ask my readers to believe me that, so far from undertaking any special reading for this essay, I have not even consulted books, though naturally with one or two exceptions all the references and citations have been checked. So far as it rests on books this essay is written entirely from remembered reading—the reading of a man who has read to live and not lived to read. So I hope that scholars will not attribute to me the unbecoming presumption to rival them. Their supremacy in their own field I wholeheartedly admit and admire. For myself, I claim nothing more than that I have read some books to supplement an individual's personal experiences which must necessarily be very limited, with the recorded experiences and opinions of others who have gone before me. It is impossible to shake off the slavery to the present otherwise, and slavery to the present is the worst enemy of understanding the present itself.

I am indebted to Mrs George Bambridge and Macmillan & Co Ltd for permission to quote extracts from the stories 'Red Dog' and 'How Fear Came', and from the poem 'The Law of the Jungle' in *The Second Jungle Book*, as also the extracts from *Kim;* and to Mrs George Bambridge and Methuen & Co for permission to quote from the poems 'The Ballad of East and West', 'Mandalay', 'Divided Destinies', and 'The 'Eathen' in *The Definitive Edition of Rudyard Kipling's Verse.*

I am particularly grateful for these permissions because the extracts are relevant to my argument, and they lend imaginative support to my conclusions which, though

independently arrived at, were set down in a prosaic manner.

I would also set down, as a matter of moral obligation, that I consider Kipling to be the only English writer who will have a permanent place in English literature with books on Indian themes, and who will also be read by everyone who wants to know not only *British* India but also *timeless* India. This is from a Bengali Babu, and *honi soit qui* (my 'patriotic' countrymen and their British friends) *mal y pense.*

NIRAD C. CHAUDHURI

NOTE ON THE TEXT

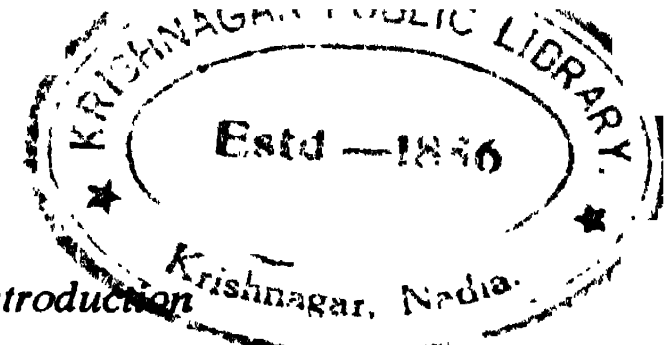
I HAVE had great difficulty, for various reasons, in securing publication for this book, and due to the consequent delay the public will see the book more than two years after its completion. I have, however, kept the text unaltered except in two respects: (1) a number of references (which will date themselves) have been introduced in footnotes and elsewhere; (2) most of the critical remarks about Nehru have been removed, because I thought that after his death any criticism of him should be given the form of historical judgement, not polemics. However, some criticisms essential to particular arguments have been retained.

Chronologically, the *terminus ad quem* for the whole book is March, 1963; but the point of view of each chapter is of the time when it was written. I hope this will give a feeling of actuality to the book, showing that it was written under the impact of unfolding events. I am not ashamed to admit that all my books are *livres de circonstance*, but I should be if they remained nothing but that.

Another motive for not trying to synchronize the 'dramatic time' of the chapters is that I wish, if possible—a large if—to induce a little respect for my anticipations in my countrymen. Whenever I have made any, they have dismissed these outright, sometimes even using such adjectives as 'foolish' and 'otiose', and, of course, they have never recalled them when they were found correct. So I have kept even those auguries which have been partly fulfilled, and I hope the reader, seeing how obvious they have become *ex post facto*, will not forget that they were made when no countryman of mine would have believed them.

But for them I do not claim any extraordinary foresight. I have only used the normal method of presaging the future by means of inference from existing facts, instead of imitating my countrymen who generally put something before their eyes to prevent their seeing the precipice over which they are going to fall.

N. C. C.



THE WORLD'S KNOWLEDGE OF INDIA SINCE 1947

IN theory the knowledge should be full as well as accurate. There are in India today a larger number of foreign observers of all kinds than were ever present in the country. Of these, the first group is comprised of the correspondents of Western newspapers and broadcasting organizations. After them come an immense number of experts concerned with most kinds of human activity. Some of them feel that though they are doing their duty by their country they are not doing much good to India. But there is nothing which frightens the present Indian ruling class more than the idea of doing anything without the advice and help of White experts. So we have them, and they range from the specialists who advise us about taxation and contraception, to those who build our dams and steel plants.* Even a Japanese gardener was brought over to convert a public park, which was being grossly neglected by the Delhi Municipality, into a Japanese garden; why, the Japanese himself could not understand. All these men come by a good deal of information, and they sometimes publish it or at all events spread it by word of mouth.

Among all these foreign experts, one species has a very special status in contemporary India. It is that of the economists. As I wrote about them in my book on England: 'There is no other country in the world in which the tribe of pundits called economists are held in greater honour. Perhaps they are the only pundits who are at all honoured by us now. So India has become an El Dorado for every kind of economist from every part of the world.'

* Since the above was written, military experts have been added, because the rulers of the country cannot and dare not defend its frontiers without making the business the White Man's Burden.

In the next row stand another set of knowledge-seekers, the diplomats. The conscientious among them, and those from North America and Europe are very much so, put in much solid work, a very heavy part of which is collection of information. They draw up reports and send them regularly to their foreign offices, which seem to have extensive cellars to mature them. They show a marvellous industry in this research, and the labour they undergo simply to make newspaper clippings appals a man like me who has never kept a note of anything in his life.

Even the novelists on India have become purveyors of sociological data. Many foreigners who are interested in our life but will devote neither the time nor the effort needed to gain any worthwhile knowledge of it read these novels. The novelists, too, conscious of the demand, and keen to meet it, go about the country notebook in hand, collect local colour and turns of speech, record snatches of conversation with special reference to such slips in English as lend themselves to caricature, and then three-quarters in ponderous solemnity, and a quarter in cold-blooded pelf-seeking malice, they turn out works which are no more fiction than blue-books are fables. In fact, at times they are documented with such apparent solidity that they may even be laid as evidence before the committees for foreign aid.

All these men taken together supply a very impressive amount of information about today's India, and if the value of any kind of knowledge was to be determined solely by its volume the outside world should be well informed about us. Yet the unexpected truth is that it knows even less about what really exists and is happening in India than it does about the countries behind the so-called Iron Curtain.

In saying this I mean no reflexion whatever on the foreign observers, especially the newspaper correspondents. They are as a rule intelligent men, trained to observe rapidly and accurately. Though most often in India they have no other means of getting acquainted with the life

of the people than visual observation, and that, too, limited to small sections, yet I have been surprised to find how frequently they arrive at notions which are remarkably close to the truth. Certainly, they see and understand more than the Anglicized ruling class. Perhaps that is behind the clamour that is raised from time to time against them, and also behind the extraordinary demand which has been put forward that foreign newspapers should be compelled to employ Indian journalists, and not correspondents of their own nationality, to report on India. But they have to work under great difficulties, deployed in depth, which impede observation, obscure interpretation, and also prevent the publication of such accurate and impartial information as can be obtained. All this necessarily vitiates what is published about India and reduces its value.

Even so I would make concessions for the correspondents, but none at all for the novelists and the writers of what nowadays is called 'reportage' and 'travelogue'—what words! There is nothing which can be said in extenuation of their works. As a rule, they contribute neither to knowledge nor to literature. To take the novels, it would surprise the Western readers who go to them that they are hardly ever read by Indians. The main reason is that they ring false. The foreign novelists know virtually nothing about India and perhaps care still less. They come to India in search of out-of-the-way material which might help them to appear original. The result is counterfeit Indian literary curios.

Unfortunately, even those Indians who write novels about themselves in English try to do no better. They take their cue from the foreign dabblers with India. They themselves are not very well posted about their own country, and most of their information is raw material gathered *ad hoc*. They belong to the Anglicized upper middle-class, which is out of touch with the life of the people and even of the poor middle-class. Moreover, just to acquire the desire to write novels in English they have to de-Indianize themselves substantially.

Over and above, in order to be novelists in English, these Indian writers are faced by a problem of writing for tackling which they have neither the knowledge nor the strength of mind. The life, the mind, and the behaviour of Indians are so strange for the people of the West that if these are described in ordinary English the books would be unintelligible to English-speaking readers, and unacceptable to British or American publishers. Most Indian writers solve this problem, not by choosing a genuine Indian subject and creating an adequate Western idiom to express it, but buy selecting wholly artificial themes which the Western world takes to be Indian, and by dealing with them in the manner of contemporary Western writers. To put it briefly, they try to see their country and society in the way Englishmen or Americans do and write about India in the jargon of the same masters. The result is an inefficient imitation of the novels about India written by Western novelists. India is far too big a subject for such frippery.

Even those who write 'travelogues' or 'reportage' have adopted this curious manner. They write as if they were Western journalists. The more advanced of them even go so far as to imitate the worst American and British journalistic antics, in imitating which these Indians show themselves, not simply as the harlequins the Western writers of this type are, but as dancing monkeys. Their antics and grimaces, which they regard as their airs and graces, prompt me to quote Ben Jonson and Edith Sitwell to say that they 'out-dance the Babioun'.

* * *

I shall now pass on to consider the special difficulties facing the Western journalists or writers. The very first of these is the compulsion or rather coercion of Indo-British and Indo-American friendship, which is not only seriously curtailing the freedom to discuss Indian subjects, but actually coming in the way of such a basic inquiry as how much of this friendship exists or for that matter is even possible. The official representatives of the British

and American Governments are the watchdogs of this friendship, and extremely nervous and yappy dogs they are, more like Pekinese in a boudoir than mastiffs in the farmer's yard. They try to brief and influence correspondents and get very angry if the latter show more independence than is considered safe in the light of policy.

Any foreign journalist who shows unwelcome curiosity, or any writer, Indian or foreign, who is capable of detachment soon runs into trouble. This has been the case with some correspondents I know, and in regard to the difficulty, in reality the impossibility, of securing publication for views not in agreement with the policies of the Great Powers, I shall give an instance which concerns me.

In 1957 I wrote an article in which I tried to describe the real state of the political relations between the United States and Britain on the one hand, and, on the other, the countries of Asia which had become independent after the war, and in it I also implied that the entire policy of economic aid to these countries was wrong. One important English journal and one well-known American magazine to which I offered it rejected it outright. But one American journal, noted for the openness of its editorial policy and for its seriousness and influence, read it with enthusiasm. The article was accepted provisionally, and I rewrote it twice at the request of the editorial staff. In the end, however, just before the expected date of publication, the journal found itself unable to publish it, though very handsomely I was paid the full honorarium. The reason for the final rejection was, however, extremely unconvincing to me. It could have been given as soon as the article was first received. So I could attribute it only to an afterthought or some adventitious difficulty, perhaps connected with the timidity shown towards India.

This timidity is reckoned on so confidently in India and has become so normal that the sudden outburst of anger in the Western Press over the Indian action over Goa at first shocked everybody here.

Compared with the Press, the British and American publishers are still relatively free from fear. Even so I have heard of an instance in which a very well-known firm of English publishers backed out of an agreement with a novelist on getting a report from its Indian branch that the book was likely to be regarded as anti-Indian in India. I also know of attempts at political censorship by British publishers of books on India.

I think that this timidity will harm everybody concerned, and India even more than Great Britain or the United States. Still, if one were to consider only the immediate interests of policy and not its long-term results, it has to be admitted that the abject fear that the West displays in respect of everything said or published about contemporary India and the other newly emancipated countries, is fully justified. Public opinion in all these countries is absurdly sensitive on this score, and even the highest in these countries—and the highest more than anyone else—are hurt and annoyed by the publication of anything short of fulsome praise. Any candid statement, or even a tactful assertion of one's national interests is misinterpreted, and leads to unpleasant consequences which no Western statesman is quite willing to face. This was shown quite plainly when the question of Great Britain's entry into the European Common Market was being discussed.

I shall recall one or two recent incidents to illustrate this. One of these arose out of a B.B.C. commentary on Ceylonese politics after the assassination of Mr Bandaranaike. Though it was both realistic and sensible, Mr Macmillan himself had to express his regrets to the Ceylonese Government and the B.B.C. had to apologize. At the same time, the correspondent was informed that all this constituted no reflexion on his professional competence, which could only mean that the regret was expedient.

Mr Herter, the former American Secretary of State, became involved in another incident which was equally characteristic. When he said that his Department had no direct knowledge of the Indo-Chinese border and his

country no direct interest in the dispute over it, I felt pleased. I thought that for once the modern practice of everybody meddling in everybody else's affairs, and thereby manufacturing a Chinese puzzle-box of quarrels, had been rejected, and there was going to be a reversion to the saner traditions and tone of diplomacy before the new open diplomacy, and the later U.N. diplomacy of showing teeth without biting, came into vogue. In any case, Mr Herter had said nothing to which any sensible person could take objection.

But no. Even before India herself had had time to feel aggrieved the American friends of India raised the cry that a grave *faux pas* had been committed, and that, however 'neutralist' India might be, the United States had no right to be neutral. The implied rebuke was that the director of American foreign policy should have remembered what was neutralist India's fundamental condition for managing international relations: it was the simple principle—those who are not *for* me, are *against* me.

Such a cue was not lost on India. Immediately handkerchiefs went to unofficial Indian eyes. The Indian Ministry of Foreign Affairs could not follow that example and admit that it was hurt. That would have been infra dig. But it professed to be 'puzzled'. That was enough, and Mr Herter furnished explanations. Even so the Press in India commented that the damage done by the original statement to Indo-American relations was not wholly repaired.

Incidents such as these keep the fear of India fresh in the minds of Western statesmen. Though the latest trend in the West seems to be a reaction from the excessive timidity, there is at least one place where it can never be anything but live. That is the Commonwealth Office in London. An Australian professor lecturing in Delhi once said that the Ministry of Commonwealth Relations in Britain was the most timid of the British Ministries, and its main job was negative—that of cautioning the British Government about the likely effect of its various policies

upon Commonwealth relations. Only a few days before him, Mr Malcolm MacDonald, then the British High Commissioner in India, had furnished confirmation in advance of the professor's opinion. Speaking on the so-called Commonwealth at a meeting in Delhi, he explained that on that occasion he was going to speak like a *model* U.K. High Commissioner, which meant that he would say nothing that could be in the slightest degree objectionable in any quarter, utter nothing but safe platitudes, and in short reveal nothing of the slightest interest to anybody. This sense of humour showed that Mr MacDonald had not surrendered wholly to the spirit of the new Commonwealth, and he kept his promise in the discourse which followed.

I shall not, however, go into the details of the powerful psychological compulsions which make both Great Britain and the United States so anxious about Indian reactions and induce them to take a far more optimistic view of what is happening in India than would have been the case if these compulsions were not present, for I intend to deal with the tangled relations between my country and the West in another book. So I pass on to consider the other obstacles in the way of gaining accurate knowledge about contemporary India.

The very first of these is the general and fairly serious ignorance about India among the foreign observers. There are very few who come even with the minimum book-knowledge, and their stay in the country is short, and their duties too pressing for them to be anything but perfunctory in regard to knowledge. In such circumstances, correct interpretation and appraisement of what is observed is not possible, though the observation itself might be extensive.

There is, next, ignorance of the languages of India. The apparent ease with which foreigners can carry on their work in English comes in the way of the discovery that no true insight into the Indian mind can be gained without a thorough knowledge, both for reading and conversation, of at least one Indian language, and if Sanskrit can be

added so much the better. A very large number of us are indeed glib in English, but glibness and expressiveness are not synonymous. The number of Indians who have a personal expression in English is not large, and it is soon found that the majority of the speakers of English employ a conventional diction for putting across conventional ideas. Besides, there is the Hindu secretiveness. No Hindu will speak frankly in English for fear of divulging what he does not want a foreigner to know. It has happened to me when I have been discussing India objectively, there have been winks at me and expressive glances at the foreigners present. It becomes worse if the foreigner speaks to our politicians. Then it seems all a tale of slithy toves, the mome raths, and the mimsy borogoves, and though the listener is compelled to remark audibly, 'It *is* grand', he cannot avoid saying to himself, 'But rather hard to understand.'

Even so I would say that all these difficulties are comparatively speaking secondary ones. There are fundamental obstacles which call for a full-fledged epistemology, so to speak. A theory of knowledge seems to be an essential prerequisite to any understanding of India by Westerners. A very sketchy one is being offered.

The most important thing to note is the revolutionary transformation that has come over the character of the knowledge about India since the country became independent. So long as British rule lasted, its strongest point was District or local adminstration. In the same way, the strongest point of the intellectual equipment was its empiric value, derived from a mass of information collected through direct field exploration. The endless series of large and solid official or semi-official publications in which it was embodied constituted a true and gigantic Encyclopaedia Indica, which has not been superseded even now and perhaps, though partly out of date, will never be replaced by anything produced by us.

The essential quality of this old knowledge was, as I have hinted, its practical usefulness. It was brought together by practical men who needed information to carry on administration, to deal with social and economic problems, and to manage people. It was not strong in generalization, and what theories it aired were more or less amateurish. But being absolutely first-hand the knowledge rang true, and to it might be applied the words of Bergson that a mind born to speculate or dream might remain outside reality, might deform or transform the real, perhaps even create it, but an intellect bent upon the act to be performed and the reaction to follow, feeling its object so as to get its mobile impression at every instant, is an intellect that touches something of the absolute. There is a tendency in certain quarters, even British—of course, degenerate British—to describe this knowledge as the propaganda of *Koi Hais*, Anglo-Indian Blimps. But the stupidity of this attitude is really more unsavoury than its opportunism.

Another important feature of the old knowledge was that it was concerned almost exclusively with rural India and the common people. The men who collected this knowledge knew little about the Westernizing middle-class, and certainly cared still less. They were repelled by this class of Indians, and always denied their representative character and discounted their influence and power. The result was an insistent emphasis on the static and conservative aspects of Indian life and thought. In this they were one-sided, but the one-sidedness was in favour of what was and will always remain nine-tenths of India.

All this has been not only changed but replaced by the opposites. The seekers of knowledge about India are no longer workers seeking it for practical ends, but nearly all *des cérébreux*, engaged in observation and interpretation, sometimes out of intellectual curiosity, sometimes in the service of preconceived ideas and policies. If their short stay in the country can be regarded as an advantage for freshness of perception and freedom from set notions,

it is also a handicap in the way of gaining insight into the modes of Indian thinking and behaviour whose patterns are wholly different from anything in the West.

Moreover, these men stay in the Westernized quarters of the big cities and know nothing of the truly Indian parts of even the same cities. Of course, they go out at times and watch the wider milieu of Indian life, and not infrequently bring back perceptive impressions. Nevertheless, these remain external and inferential.

Thus the world's knowledge about India today is obtained overwhelmingly at one remove from people belonging to the Westernized and urban upper middle-class, who have become the heirs of British rule. For nimbleness of wit, plausibility, argumentative skill, and gift of the gab they are not surpassed by many people on the face of the earth. But in the very nature of things they are unqualified to give a full or fair view of what is taking place in the country. For one thing, they have their trusteeship of the people of India, which I look upon their exploitation, to justify. This makes them prone to misrepresent and even to lie. But it would be a mistake to think that as a class they deceive intentionally. They are so completely imitative of the West, so dependent on current literature written in English, mostly by foreigners, for their knowledge of their own country, so ignorant about the original sources of knowledge, and so formed by their urban upbringing that the whole of traditional and rural India remains outside their ken. Perhaps their outlook can be best indicated by saying that the two things in India they ignore most and even dismiss as unimportant are Hinduism and agriculture.

Can anything be done about it? To this question, under the existing conditions the answer is virtually an unqualified 'No'. Any attempt to know India by direct observation is resented. Already the Western Press is under a cloud in India, and is suspected of bias and hostility, and a correspondent who sets store by objectivity soon finds the taps of information shut off. If, in addition, a

large number of qualified foreigners were to appear with the avowed object of carrying out field observation, the existing silken curtain is likely to be replaced by one of iron.

I come last of all to an obstacle in the way of knowledge which is interwoven with the very stuff of India in the material sense. Anyone seeking insight into our life cannot afford the luxury of avoiding or forgetting unpleasant experiences. A man out only for agreeable sensations will be beaten at the very outset by the common riddles of our existence: an indefinite sickness of heart which seems to damp off everything living; arid, dour, and laughterless personalities which yet are lackadaisical in action as well as thought. The great plain with its drawn, parched, and ascetical look at least wrinkles to a skyward smile during the rains, human beings never. It is a country which exacts robustness or inflicts neurosis.

Occidentals come from a clean and tidy material world, in which dirt, squalor, and disorder are sins. But I declare every day that a man who cannot endure dirt, dust, stench, noise, ugliness, disorder, heat, and cold has no right to live in India. I would say that no man can be regarded as a fit citizen of India until he has conquered squeamishness to the point of being indifferent to the presence of fifty lepers in various stages of decomposition within a hundred yards, or not minding the sight of ubiquitous human excreta everywhere, even in a big city.

I at least can claim that I have not run away from any of these. For the last twenty years I have lived in a part of old Delhi where none of the makers of new India ever visit me, not only because that would be physically unpleasant to them but also for the reason that it would be socially derogatory. Yet I have not moved out, nor will.

I live just inside the old wall built originally by the Mogul Emperor Shah Jahan, overlooking a fine park and

commanding a magnificent view of the famous Ridge, the Jumna, and the Jami Masjid. It is probably the finest aspect to be seen anywhere in Delhi. My Western friends say that it reminds them of the view of the Borghese Gardens from the Pincio. But after independence, for four years, I saw people easing themselves in this park in the morning, sitting in rows. During this time the stench was so foul that after inhaling it for a year I fell ill and came very near death. Within the city I have seen streets running with sewage water and faeces floating on it, while, undisturbed by this, vendors of vegetables and other foodstuffs were selling their produce on the adjacent pavements. I have never objected to or minded all this, and I will say that if I have any living knowledge of my country it is a reward for this unflinching realism. So, when Anglicized Indians come to argue with me I expect them to possess at least a fragment of my knowledge and toleration of these conditions.

But at the same time I must warn all Western observers against misinterpreting this all-pervasive squalor and untidiness. A good deal of such misinterpretation already exists, some of it innocent, some malicious. There are two appearances in India which are utterly deceptive. The first of these is the glib talk of the Anglicized upper middle-class, and the second the external squalor. Neither mean what they would have meant in the West. To take only squalor, in our society it does not have the same correlation with character as it has among European peoples. For instance, in the West a man who has not shaved or has not changed a dirty shirt will be judged as a man with an inefficient mind and slovenly character. In our society this association does not exist, and an unkempt person might be an exemplary person, besides being an efficient hand. More is said on this subject in Chapter 9 of this book.

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Squeamishness is out of place in India. I put up with almost everything, as I have already said. In fact, the

necessity to be psychologically proof against filth is the first condition of understanding our life. Therefore, I am tempted to read an allegory for those who seek enlightenment about India in a story of the Arabian Nights. It is the tale of Prince Diamond, who wanted to go to the fabulous city of Wakak. A holy man warned him against so rash a venture. 'Do not', he said, 'take an endless road filled with terrors, give up your desperate quest. You might spend your whole life, and that in vain, in trying to reach Wakak, and if by fortunate chance you arrive there you would lose your soul.' How many Occidentals have paid this price by trying to write about India!

Princess after princess, every one of whom fell in love with him, entreated him to desist. But at last one of them, herself the daughter of a king of the Jinn, finding him inflexibly resolved and set on his purpose, thought it better to help him than allow him to go to his doom. She gave him some magic weapons, which she said would protect him, and told him to seek out her uncle, the Jinni Flying Simurg, who alone could take him to Wakak. Then she bade farewell to him in bitter tears, after taking a promise that if he came back safely he would remember and return her love.

After many wanderings the Prince at last came upon Simurg, but only to find him sleeping and snoring under a tree. He waited, but when the giant did not wake up even after a long time he lost his patience and began to tickle the soles of the huge feet, which awakened Simurg. But the crafty thing pretended to see nothing, and eyeing the Prince maliciously let out a terrible fart. This went on for over an hour until the atmosphere all around was so charged that any living creature would have been poisoned. But, of course, the Prince was protected against the foulness by the magic weapons. The Jinni was astonished to find the trick he had played foiled, and asked, 'What has enabled you to survive the blasts from my bum?' The Prince held up the weapons, upon which the giant stood up, made a deep bow, and offered to be his slave.

When he learned that Prince Diamond wanted to go to Wakak, Simurg took him on his back, inflated his great body to an even greater size, and flew up. After seven days of flying they arrived over the shining city of Wakak.

I think the genii who guard the secrets of our country, life, and civilization put us to the same test before they will allow us to see real India. But when they do carry us up what a vision it is! Has anyone pondered over the difference which even a height of two hundred feet makes to our conception of the earth we live on? All its squalor and confusion vanish, and we see things spread out below in order, goodness, beauty. So, when I visit the hills, I like to go up to an eminence and sit on it. Even in the big cities in which I have spent most of my life by favourite perch is a high roof.

But the strongest conviction that I had of the power of height to liberate the vision and spirit of man was when, on an air journey from London to Paris, I flew over Dieppe. The coast of the Channel was drawn as if with a brush, the little town with the country around it looked like a beautifully drawn and coloured map, and every small detail was clear. Was this the place, I asked myself, where the expedition had gone wrong and come to grief after running up against unknown obstacles? How stupid! However, it was I who was being stupid. My position high up in the air had so elated me that I completely forgot what blind and helpless creatures we were on the ground. A favourite poem had passed clean out of my mind. It was that in which Baudelaire takes the albatross as the symbol of the poet and compares the bird's grand flights with its waddling on the dock of a ship:

Ce voyageur ailé, comme il est gauche et veule!
Lui, naguère si beau, qu'il est comique et laid!
L'un agace son bec avec un brûle-gueule,
L'autre mime, en boitant, l'infirme qui volait!

None of us can escape this torture of the body on the ground, but there is no power on earth which can deprive us of the freedom to escape in a different way—to rise in spirit to the infinity of silent spaces, which do not frighten but only strengthen.

Chapter 1

FROM THE WORD TO THE EYE

WHEN I hear my foreign friends speak of 'an Indian' or 'Indians' I sometimes interrupt them breezily: 'Please, please do not use that word. Say "Hindu" if you have in mind a human type common to the whole continent; otherwise, according as you want to refer to this or that group, say "Bengali, Punjabi, Hindustani, Marathi, Tamil, Sikh, Muslim", and so on. As to the word "Indian", it is only a geographical definition, and a very loose one at that.'

I know what would happen if I were to say anything like that to a person belonging to the present ruling class in India. 'Rubbish,' he would burst out, 'Hinduism is dying, if it is not already dead. Our industrial revolution will kill it, and that would be right. We have proclaimed a secular state, and to try to bring back into it an out-of-date religious notion is rank obscurantism. That might do for Pakistan, a backward, theocratic country, but India is progressive, and is admired by the whole world for her progressive outlook and activities.'

Yet I also know that I can persuade the very same men to withdraw their loud objection very easily, even without starting a Socratic argument about the extinction or survival of Hinduism. They can be outflanked by a simple verbal march. There is no set of men more sensitive to definitions and even quibbles. It needs very little Greek to discover that the words 'Hindu' and 'Indian' are etymologically the same, being derivatives of the Persian and Greek forms of an identical definition. The Persian word was aspirated, whereas the Greek was softly breathed, and that probably began the parting of ways. The definition originally meant 'an inhabitant of the region of the river Indus' (in Sanskrit—*Sindhu*), but was

extended to the people of the whole continent. Thus, in its primary meaning, the word 'Hindu' stands for the same thing as 'Indian', and until recently it was used only in this sense in the United States.

With my countrymen, I have no need to carry the argument further. But those Europeans who have read about us may remind me that it is not all so simple.

Perfectly true, for very early in its history the word came to embody much more than a mere geographical notion. The peoples of the Near and Middle East found out very soon that the dominant human group beyond the Indus belonged to a closed society which was not only highly organized in itself, but was also possessed of an intense and acute self-consciousness. The most important ideas within this self-consciousness were the following: that the members of this vast society were bloodkins, and no one who was not born into it could be of it, at least without the legal fiction of birth and assimilation through the slow operation of the ever-elastic caste system; that they were not only a Chosen People, but *The People;* that their way of life was divinely ordained and eternal; that it was superior to all others; that there was an unbridgeable gulf between them and the older inhabitants of the country, as well as foreigners.

There was nothing strange or novel in such a conviction of the individuality and even superiority of a people: similar feelings have existed elsewhere. What distinguished the Hindus from all others was, however, the fanatical rigour with which they applied and worked out the genetic principle. The concept of such an exclusive society was naturally associated with the word 'Hindu', and therefore it did not long remain the simple geographical definition which at first it was.

I am ready to modify so far my contention that the word 'Hindu' is primarily a geographical expression. Indeed, whenever I use it I feel its cultural connotation very strongly, and I wish to evoke a cultural type. But I am unable to admit any exclusively or even dominantly

religious association into it. This was read into it quite recently. I am surprised to find how many people, even among those who are well educated, think that we are Hindus because we have a religion called Hinduism, and that the word is comparable to 'Christian' or 'Muslim'. It had no such association for the Hindus or for their neighbours in former times. This crept in when modern European Orientalists began to study the religions of India. They found that the Hindus had no other name for the whole complex of their religious beliefs and practices except the phrase *Sanatana Dharma* or the Eternal Way; they did not even have a word of their own for religion in the European sense; and so the Orientalists coined the word 'Hinduism' to describe that complex of religion. Actually, we Hindus are not Hindus because we have a religion called or understood as Hinduism; our religion has been given the very imprecise label of 'Hinduism' because it is the jumble of the creeds and rituals of a people known as Hindus after their country. On this analogy, the Greek religion might be called Hellenism, and even Graecism.

In precise use, the religious suggestion of the word 'Hindu' should be kept at its minimum, if not kept out altogether. All Hindus of today, if they have anything Hindu left in them, and have not, through an inefficient Westernization, acquired an unpleasantly shallow anti-religious bias like the anti-clericalism of the French politician, think of themselves as a human community almost wholly in a cultural sense, and the religious association felt by the denatured Hindu is hardly present in their mind. Strictly speaking, the term Hindu is like 'American' or 'European', with only a far stronger genetic suggestion than is to be found in the two latter words.

Nevertheless, I neither expect nor desire to be taken too literally or seriously in my objection to the word 'Indian'. I myself employ it quite frequently, and I cannot claim that I always do so with discrimination. I am sure even in this book, which begins with a purist's plea, there will be

found many instances of improper use of the word. But at least I can say that I am fully aware of the *mot injuste*, and I know what I mean when I use it with any degree of care. For me then, the word 'Indian' bears only one or other of the two following senses:

1. An inhabitant of the geographical continent of India, which for practical purposes is India as it was constituted politically in the last decade of British rule.

2. A legally recognized citizen of the new sovereign State called the Republic and Union of India, it being clearly understood that I do not consider that all the citizens of this State belong to one nation. In their case, *de jure* nationality is not the same as *de facto* nationality.

Over and above, so far as I can, I try to exclude all cultural suggestion from my employment of the word 'Indian', which is always implied in my use of the word 'Hindu'. But if in spite of this, in some contexts, such a suggestion seems to creep in, it will be seen that I am then using the word as a loose equivalent of 'Hindu'.

My real object in interrupting my friends is to make a gesture of protest against the addiction to words of the educated modern Hindu. I must warn all foreigners interested in India against the enlightenment they get at the hands of our politicians, officials, and professors. With these men, they have necessarily to maintain close contacts, but that, unless the disciples are put on guard against it, may become dangerously infective.

Hindu *Gurus*, that is, spiritual guides, always initiate their *chelas* or disciples into the use of drugs, especially *ganja* or *bhang* (*Canabis indica*), which are supposed to give beatific visions. The secular Hindu *Gurus* have not given up the tradition, but the drug they offer is different. It is the most harmful drug made in India today, which if taken in large quantities—and the quantities administered *are* large—completely destroys the faculties of thinking and observing. I shall call it Logosane, a meaningless, tasteless, colourless, but intellectually asphyxiating substance, turned out from the only really efficient mass-production

factory established in India since independence, namely, the Nationalized Factory of Words.

What should we do then?—the foreign student of contemporary India will surely ask me. Certainly, I do not expect or want him to be so incivil as to plug his ears with cotton-wool when he is listening to the torrent of words. If he likes he can even say: 'The sounding cataract haunts me like a passion.' I only caution him against the *anexetastos logos*, the unexamined word. He can listen to everything so long as he is exercising criticism. By doing so he will discover that most often the English words used by our political and intellectual leaders stand for very little else than the letters they are written with. Even this will be a gain, though a negative one.

By way of positive advice I would request them to use their eyes. I shall try to illustrate what can be done by using them even superficially in connexion with the subject of this book—the peoples of India. Indian ethnography is burdened with a formidable load of words derived from the successive stages of its study, and in general conversation the obsolete terms are just as much current coin as the newest and the most fashionable ones. This indiscriminate vocabulary gives the earnest beginner a sense of being totally out of his depth. But his eyes can drastically simplify the picture for him.

They will show that there really are *only three* physical types in India, and not even a fourth worth speaking about. Classified by the popular and easily applied criterion of distinguishing human beings—complexion, these are the Blacks, the Browns, and the Yellows. The Darks (I shall call the Blacks so) are fairly uniform, being of a very deep shade of brown; the Yellows have two shades, the coppery (light or dark) and the true pale Mongoloid; the Browns on the other hand are very varied, ranging from the European blond to a dark, almost walnut, brown. Another point which has to be noted is that the Darks and the Yellows are more or less stable genetically, whereas the Browns are not at all so. In India proper the offspring

of very dark parents may be quite fair. There are, of course, intermediates, but on the whole the three complexions stand out in large and clearly distinguishable masses.

Now for the features. Three types are clearly marked in these too. The Darks are not Negroid, but have as a rule sharp and modelled faces, with a high though at times a rather broad nose, and large, black, and liquid eyes. They all have good figures, the men being muscular and often wiry, the women full but not fat. Anthropologists call this type Australoid, illogically as it seems to me. Of course, the reason they give is that these people resemble the Australian aborigines in their appearance, but they seem to forget that, if anything, it is the Australian primitives who should be called Indoid, because in some distant time man must have gone to Australia from South Asia.

The Yellows, copper or pale, have the familiar Mongolian features, the high cheek bone, flat nose, and eyes with the characteristic slant due to the epicanthic fold.

The Browns have what are usually described as Caucasoid features, and to all appearance they constitute the Indian variety of the human type which is found all over Europe and western Asia. Though in India the type is often dark, for which I have called it Brown instead of White, it can be easily distinguished from the true Darks of India, and should be.

The last point that has to be made about these types is a very important one. It is that they are clearly separated from one another by their geographical distribution. Though faces which seem to be a blend of the Browns and the Darks occur in large numbers almost everywhere, and a blend of the Browns and the Yellows is also met with here and there, the three major types are concentrated in their distribution. Each is found in regions which seem to have been made into its fixed and normal habitat. One might even say that each type has as stable an ecology as plants.

The Mongoloids are confined to the Himalayan regions and the hills of Assam, though they have also spilled out in small numbers on the edges of the adjacent plains. The Darks in their free state are massed in the hilly and wooded areas of Central India and the Deccan. In a servile state they are found in small or large numbers in all parts of India, but are most numerous in the South. The Browns, on their part, live in the plains, large or small, and if they are also found in certain hilly regions it will be seen that these are river valleys, along which they have penetrated into the territory of the Darks or Yellows, and created trouble for everybody concerned. Overwhelmingly, however, they are plainsmen and at home only on the plains of India.

These simple facts, which any man could discover by only using his eyes, at once sweeps away the mass of cobwebs which covers up Indian ethnology and ethnic history. But the gain need not be confined to the field of intellectual investigation alone. The same set of visual facts are a practical help, for they contribute to an understanding and even solution of one of the most acute and baffling problems of Indian politics, namely, the unending human conflicts which raged in the country in the past and are continuing today. If the familar words about the tolerance and capacity for synthesis of the Hindus were true, one would be hard put to it to explain why there are such deep suspicions and enmities among the human groups of India, why there are endemic outbursts of murderous ferocity, two of the worst of which swept two large provinces of the country recently.

To take the worst conflict, all my life I have been scandalized by the discrepancy between the actual state of Hindu-Muslim relations, and their presentation in words. I have seen and read about murder, arson, loot, and rape on a colossal scale arising out of Hindu-Muslim clashes, and I have read simultaneously that there was no reason whatever for these because the Hindus and the Muslims were ethnically and culturally *one*.

After independence the words have even improved their performance. In announcing these conflicts the authorities do not refer to Hindus or Muslims, they speak of attacks by one community on another. At their frankest they go only so far as to use the phrases 'Majority community' and 'Minority community'. Mankind has indeed sought mental protection against unpleasant realities by denying them or employing euphemisms. But the Hindus have carried this device to its absurdest extreme, and thereby created an unseemly opposition between what exists and what is spoken about. Therefore I say, 'Beware of words in India; above all, beware of *verba magistri*.'

Now let us see what can be done by using the eyes. This at once shows that the conflicts can be related to visual facts. For instance, the three ethnic groups which I have described and the classification of which is based wholly on the observation of external differences, furnish the key to one of the oldest human conflicts in India, that which has existed between the civilized Browns on the one side, and the Yellow and Dark primitives on the other.

There is fear and hatred of their Hindu rulers among all the Dark aboriginals. They feel that the Hindus are going to make, and indeed have already made, deeper inroads into their territories, economy, and life than was even thought of by any set of former rulers, including the British, under whom the country was most united politically. So, after independence, many of them are claiming autonomy, or at least separate provinces for themselves.

Outside the tribal areas the conflict between the Darks and the Browns has taken the form of a revolt of the lower, and especially the untouchable castes against the higher. In some areas it is responsible for a repudiation in principle of the authority of the central government. This inter-caste conflict is, of course, most virulent in the South, where the servile Darks are most numerous.

The Mongoloids on their part are not less alarmed and resentful. Actually, they are more actively so. They were left alone even by the British, who for reasons of

imperial strategy felt compelled to bring within their juridical border territories which neither the Hindus nor the Muslims ever ruled. One small and very primitive Mongoloid tribe, among whom British administrators went only under Gurkha escort, has even risen in revolt and defied the armed might of India. After many years of military operations the area remains a festering political sore, and if the tribe has not been able to withstand the Indian army, it has not been intimidated either. On the contrary, its resistance has impressed the Hindu rulers so much that they have given it a certain amount of autonomy. But the tribe has not been appeased.

I hope I have been able to make out a case that there does exist a connexion between the physical traits that the eye can see and some political conflicts in India today. The method can be extended by observing the differences of appearance which are made by cultures (including religion) and trying to find out if they too can be related to certain other conflicts. Of course, they can be. The Muslims of India, in spite of all that is said loosely about their being the same people as the Hindus, can be distinguished from the latter not only by their dress, speech, and manners, but even by their features and expression. In the same way, a Sikh will never be mistaken anywhere in the world for anybody else. And it is a commonplace that these two groupings, in which two cultures have characteristic external expressions, are behind two other political tensions in contemporary India.

Once you have declared your independence against the reign of words, you will recognize the truth (which everybody should see, but in actual fact does not) that the ethnic conflicts of India, both past and present, have arisen basically from the course of the history of India. Indeed, they are a part of the historical process, accompanying it as heat does chemical processes. There is, however, an important difference between the two. The ethnic process has not, except for a single exceptional phase, turned out an amal-

gam; what it has precipitated has always been a physical mixture, which has remained more or less inflammable.

Thus one is led on to the most outstanding feature of the ethnic history of India—that whenever there has been an active stage in the formation of the population of India there have also been conflicts. It is not necessary to go back to past times to illustrate this. Everybody knows that India did not become independent in 1947 without an ethnic regrouping, which in two provinces, the Punjab and Bengal, brought about large-scale displacements amounting virtually to an exchange of populations. But this was not accomplished peacefully or in an orderly way, nor were the attendant disturbances foreseen, though they could and should have been. There were violent upheavals as if the country had exploded; in addition, there were massacres and plunder on a scale hardly seen before even in this land of recurrent anarchy. In Delhi we saw killings compared with which even those by Nadir Shah were minor horrors. In Calcutta the slaughter was worse.

I can give a more recent example of a human conflict brought about by economic and cultural rivalry. In India movements of population from province to province create problems akin to those brought into existence by immigration in other countries. Terrible ill-feelings are generated by the competition that follows. One interprovincial (really international) clash of this sort was seen in eastern India as recently as 1960. In Assam there existed and still exists a good deal of enmity between the Bengalis settled there and the descendants of the Mongoloid Ahom conquerors, kindred of the Shans of Burma, who invaded the country in the thirteenth century. In 1960 it burst out in open rioting in the Brahmaputra valley. The behaviour of the contemporary Ahoms was in striking contrast with that of the older Mongoloids in the hills, who wanted only to live and let live. They never attacked the settled population of the adjacent plains unless attacked in their own territory, and at the worst they launched a razzia once in a while.

But the Mongoloid Ahoms, though Hinduized, rampaged on the war path. To the cry of 'Bangal kheda' ('Drive out the Bengalis') they murdered the Bengali settlers, violated their women, burnt their houses. To all appearance, feeling safe that the provincial government which was predominantly Ahom would connive or at least turn the blind eye to their doings, they ran amuck. For the first few days nobody suppressed the outbreak, and when at last the army was called out, the fire had almost burnt itself out. The episode left both the sides more embittered and alienated than before.

These two examples, fresh as they are, typically illustrate the special nature of the human conflicts in India. The antagonisms increase in direct proportion to the intensity of the cultural consciousness. The Hindus and the Muslims of India were and are acutely self-conscious in this way, and the enmity between the two has also been the greatest. The Mongoloid Ahoms only demonstrated the general law afresh. They had accepted Hindu culture from Bengal, and none but a madman will say that their language is not a dialectal offshoot of Bengali. Even their war cry is corrupt Bengali. But in recent years they have developed a very strong sense of an Assamese collective personality. With that they have also acquired a violent hatred for the Bengalis, who brought them into the fold of Hindu civilization, if not civilization itself. Had they remained the primitives that they were when they came, like the Garos, Nagas, Khasis, or Kukis, there certainly would not have been massacres. Among us Indians, cannibalism, in a manner of speaking, is the product, not of the savage state, but of the civilized. The Muslims used to divide the world into two contrasted halves of a *Dar-al-Islam*, a land of peace, and a *Dar-al-Harb*, a land of strife, and if they included India in the land of strife for their own reason, India has provided her seasons to be regarded as such.

No one dealing with the peoples of India historically or descriptively can avoid a discussion of these conflicts. I

too cannot do so. But what I have to say about them will be said and suggested incidentally. The main purpose of this book is to describe the peoples of India in their natural groupings, both ethnic and cultural, and analyse their collective personality in the light of the historical evolution which has formed it. Therefore it will be only when I have to discuss the inter-relations of the groups that I shall try to explain the nature of each conflict.

Chapter 2

THE DEPOSITS OF TIME

THE main ethnic groups I have to pass in review in this book are the following: the aboriginals, the Hindus, the Muslims, and the products, both genetic and cultural, of the European conquest. Among these, the Hindus are undoubtedly the most important. However, before beginning the separate accounts, I think it is necessary to give a short sketch of the entire ethnic history of India which has deposited the groups. This brief account, too, I have to preface with a methodological explanation.

It is my practice in my writings to state my positive views without discussing or even mentioning the usually held theories to which mine are opposed. This prompts my Indian critics to cast the same old views in my teeth, and charge me with the ignorance of the elementary facts of Indian history. This may happen again, for in this chapter also the reader will miss many of the conventional descriptions and theories found in the current histories of India.

In defence I would say that not only am I familiar with the views in question, but I was actually brought up on them. They constituted the first stock of information and ideas about our country and its civilization with which I began my mental life, and which I used as a fulcrum to

arrive at my later ideas. I had to absorb them because they made up the myths, to use the fashionable word, of our national existence in modern times. I was told about them, I was made to study them, I believed in them, and I examined and re-examined them until I came to lose faith in them.

It is somewhat irritating to have the opinions with which I started but have now left behind, rammed down my throat again, not even as a rechauffé, but as very stale meat. I am old, and I cannot spend the few years that are left to me in tilting at theories which I have taken a lifetime to outgrow. So in this book, too, I shall take the more sensible course of setting down my own ideas for what they are worth, and leave it at that. There is another, and perhaps a better, reason for doing so. The shibboleths I have in mind are already obsolescent not only as historical theories but also as myths of nationalism, and soon they are likely to be wholly obsolete. So I can spare myself the quixotism of tilting at them.

I cannot, however, open the story logically with the very first emergence or arrival of man in India. The first phase lies below the horizon even of prehistory. It is not that we are absolutely without all archaeological evidence on that age, but what little we have cannot be pieced together into anything positive, nor can the history of those far-off times be brought into relation with what follows.

For instance, stone implements supply a few points of flickering light in a great darkness. We know from them that palaeolithic man lived in India, both in the north and the south. Yet it is not possible to venture any guess as to his age or origins. To speculate on these questions in terms of absolute chronology is utterly futile. Even a relative chronology is difficult to establish, and no one can say on the strength of such typological analogies as exist that the various forms of palaeolithic culture in India were contemporaneous with the corresponding ones in Europe. We do not also know what ethnic types accompanied the

implements, a relationship which is fairly clear in Europe from the Mousterian epoch onwards.

Next, in India as in Europe, palaeolithic culture was followed by the neolithic, chalcolithic, and so on. But nothing is known about the transitions, especially their causes—whether they were due to the arrival of new folks or to the adoption or borrowing of new technologies from more advanced neighbours by peoples on a lower level of culture who were already settled in India, or by a combination of both.

Lastly, it is proved by the survivals that the primitive population of India, existing before the coming of civilized man, was not homogeneous either in culture or in physical characters. Some must have been much more primitive than the others in both ways, and the gulf dividing the least developed from the most developed may have been very wide. Yet the origins, sequences, and inter-relations of these primitives remain totally obscure.

Fortunately, for my purpose, these gaps in knowledge do not matter. What I am concerned with is a living and continuing process, and what I wish to understand in the light of the past is the interaction of the groups now existing, in their co-operation as well as conflicts. For this nothing more is needed than a roughly correct picture of the ethnic situation in India when the process began. The starting point, together with the given position from which the continuous development began, is all that I want, and this to my thinking can be inferred to within a fair degree of probability.

Let me deal with the starting point first. It coincides with the appearance of the cleavage which is absolutely basic to the ethnography of India—a cleavage which, once it had made its appearance, was never obliterated afterwards. It is the chasm which separates all the primitives of India *en bloc*, without regard for the differences of cultural development existing among them, from all the civilized peoples *en bloc*, whatever the species of civilization to which they in their secondary groupings, belong. An-

thropologists, archaeologists, and historians will have no difficulty in understanding which distinction I have in mind, for it is one which is absolutely basic to their disciplines.

It was no less basic to the Hindus of ancient India, though as a problem of living and not of study. It vitally concerned their existence in the country, and therefore they never forgot it, nor allowed it to be forgotten by the other side. But they defined it in terms of race, that is, genetically. They called themselves '*Arya*' (Aryan), which signified 'nobly born', and the pre-existing people '*Anarya*' (not Aryan), and they made the boundary line between the two absolutely impassable in theory, and very difficult to cross in practice. The notion of racial superiority, which was present in this distinction from the outset, was later widened to include that of moral superiority. The Hindu said to a fellow-Hindu, 'You are *Arya*,' in the same tone as that which an English colonial assumed when he said to a fellow-colonial, 'You are *White*.' Any dishonourable act or conduct was described as being unworthy of an Aryan, or befitting only a non-Aryan. The Sanskrit phrase *Anarya-jushta* (*Na* + *Aryajustha* or *Anarya* + *jushta*) might have meant either.

But this opposition could have emerged only with the coming of the so-called Aryans, i.e. the event or series of events which forms the watershed between prehistory and history in India. The date usually assigned to the arrival is between 1500 B.C. and 1200 B.C. It seems to me that a vague mental association with the Achaeans and Dorians has had something to do with this chronology. I would, however, place the coming of the *true* Aryans to India (please note the adjective, although they might have been the *only* Aryans) later. Without giving any reasons for doing so I would say that they moved into the Punjab around 1000 B.C., if not even a century or two later. But whatever the date, it was the confrontation of the Aryans, the *first civilized* people to settle in India proper, with the dark primitives that set in motion the continuous ethnic history of India.

Let me now consider the situation which the Aryans found and had to face. By the time they arrived, all the Darks of the country had virtually become fused into one mass, within which some peoples with very rudimentary cultures survived in pockets but were swamped in the whole of the primitive society by communities whose culture, though primitive, was fairly advanced within those limits. The latter made up the main body of the aboriginals. To the incoming civilized people the cultural differences among the primitives were immaterial, perhaps even imperceptible. They took notice of that difference alone which struck them most, the contrast between themselves—a fair-complexioned civilized people, and the dark-skinned and, to them, savage peoples. For all purposes of history, as distinct from those of anthropology, the Darks taken as a whole may be looked upon as the autochthons of India.

What matters for subsequent history is the fact that the primitives of India had made a good deal of progress in technology before the coming of the Aryans, whatever might have been the force behind the progress. They also continued to make technological progress while remaining in contact with the Aryans. Classical Sanskrit literature represents the primitives as hunters par excellence, and not as agriculturists, but nothing that it says bars the possibility that rudimentary agriculture may have been practised by some of them. The first Aryan settlers, too, must have known them mostly as hunters.

This brief indication of the early progress of the aboriginals is largely conjectural, but it is not implausible. Greater confidence is, however, permissible in speaking about their geographical distribution when the Aryans arrived. There can be no doubt that, as organized communities, in their free state, and in pursuing their natural economy—hunting, the primitives were always living where now we find the modern aboriginals, namely, in the hilly and wooded regions of Central India and the Deccan. The Gangetic plain was too wet and marshy for a hunting folk, who could not

live in a region where game was difficult to find and run down. At the most, they could have descended only to those plains and river valleys of the south which were dry. But it is possible that a few extremely savage and backward primitives may have lived in the swampy northern plains, and as these became drier, a few more moved down.

The hills, however, provided enough room for the hunters, and suited them better. Sanskrit literature puts them there, and there can be no doubt that their normal habitat was Central India and the Deccan plateau. In these regions the primitives must have lived for centuries, perhaps millennia, slowly absorbing cultural influences from outside.

But at the eastern and north-western ends of the country the ethnic situation was wholly different. To take the north-west first; the land of the five rivers, or of the seven rivers as it was called in ancient times, did not form part of India, nor does it do so now. Geographically, it belongs to the Middle Eastern Zone. Culturally, it must have passed to that region very early, even if it did not form an outlier of western Asia from the very beginning of human life. Such archaeological people from the Middle East began to settle in the Punjab, forming the outer ring of the diffusion of agricultural techniques from their centre in Mesopotamia. This expansion towards India could not have been later than the early Bronze Age in western Asia. The culture of the early agriculturists is uniform all over the Middle East, from Palestine to Baluchistan and even the Indus basin. But while in Mesopotamia these people evolved into city-dwellers and created an urban civilization, farther east they remained agricultural and pastoral.

This was natural. The agricultural society of the Punjab remained relatively static, standing as it did on the eastern-most edge of the circle within which waves of culture moved outwards in concentric circles from the centre. By the time the waves reached the Indus they lost most of their momentum. Therefore, while the cradle of the new

agricultural civilization progressed from a state of non-literacy to proto-literacy, and then to full literacy, the eastern periphery remained relatively primitive, though within the framework of agriculture and pastoralism.

But the influence of the literate and urban civilization of Mesopotamia played on the agriculturists of the Punjab up to a point. There were trading settlements from certain communities within the orbit of that civilization among them. These settlements naturally stood on the highway of commerce, which ran from the west coast of India into the interior of the country along the great rivers, Indus and Sutlej. Through these posts the peasant society of the Punjab remained in contact with the Mesopotamian civilization. But even apart from the connexion through these intrusive trading posts, the natural orientation of the people of the Punjab was towards the west, which had sent them out. All their cultural and technological associations and affiliations were on that side, and as to their ethnic character all that can be said of the first agricultural population of Iran can also be said of them.

Let me turn next to the far eastern extremity of India. Like the western end, the eastern too was isolated from the main block of the country and from the hunting Darks. Perhaps the separation was even more complete on that side than on the western. Here the barrier was formed by the swamps and marshes of Bengal. But the uplands of Assam were habitable, and they began to receive their human fauna from eastern and south-eastern Asia. These migrations must have begun very early, and they continued down to quite recent times. It would seem that the ethnic movement, wherever it might have originated, which gave Borneo its Dyaks, to mention only one primitive people, also brought the Garos and the Nagas, the most ancient Mongoloids of India, into Assam. These and the later Mongoloids who settled in Assam remained aloof from the Hindus and the Hinduized Mongoloids on the plains, keeping intact their primitive social organization and culture.

Thus at the dawn of history India, it may be assumed with a certain amount of confidence, was divided into three ethnic and cultural zones: that of the fair pastoral and agricultural people in the Punjab; that of the Dark hunters in the mainland; and that of the Mongoloid primitives in Assam. All the three groups led isolated and self-contained lives, each within its zone.

Now begins the continuous course of the ethnic history of India. The relative staticity of the agricultural society of the Punjab and of the hunting society of the main block of the country, together with the self-sufficiency of the Darks, was broken by a new and potent movement from the west which came through the Middle East, though it did not originate in that region. It brought into India a warrior folk, whom following the analogy in European archaeology I shall call the Bow and Chariot people. Of course, they were the so-called Aryans.

They had begun the long trek which brought them to the banks of the Indus at least seven or eight hundred years earlier. It is generally agreed, and there is more in this consensus than a scholarly convention based on insufficient data, that these people came originally from somewhere between the Danube and the Volga. But the route they followed remains inferential beyond the point at which it is lighted up by written history. The first recorded allusions to a people who seem to be Aryans or at all events speakers of languages of the Indo-European family, are found in Mesopotamian, Hittite, and Egyptian inscriptions, which show these people as settled in Mesopotamia, probably in the whole of the Fertile Crescent. It is not possible to say whether they had arrived there through Asia Minor, or through the Caucasus, or by way of both.

To speak of only one Aryan group, the one which seems to be nearest to the people of the Rigveda, the Mitannians or Hurrians were in upper Mesopotamia in the fifteenth and fourteenth centuries B.C., and then they suddenly disappeared, probably by submergence in the Semitic population, or perhaps owing to an eastward migration of the

bulk of this group of Aryans. One thing about which there can be no doubt is that the Mitanni were very closely related to the Aryans who finally went to Persia and thence to India, if the two were not the same people. Their princes had names which sound Sanskritic as well as Persic, and their language contained words which are almost identical with those with corresponding meanings in Sanskrit. They had the same gods, and were both fond of horses and chariots. So it would seem that even if the Vedic Aryans were not the same people as the Mitanni, they were one of the nearest branches of a common stock. This Mitannian-Mesopotamian connexion is the only thing which is certain in the history of the Indo-Aryans before they came to India.

In any case, some Aryans moved east from Mesopotamia taking the route to Iran, leaving the less adventurous stranded between the Twin Rivers of Sloth to pay the price. It would seem that the migrants took about four hundred years to settle down in Iran and Aryanize the country. Then another eastward push began. This appears to have been due to a family quarrel, which is recorded in Hindu mythology as the war between the Devas and the Asuras, the Gods and the Titans. All Hindu texts are agreed in making the enemies closely related in blood and culture. Some texts regard them as brothers, sons of the same father Prajapati, who himself could not distinguish between the two, while others make them cousins through their mothers, sons of two sisters, who bore the names of Aditi and Diti. The names are certainly back-formations from the words *Aditya*—a certain group of Hindu gods, and *Daitya*, which in Sanskrit means Titan or Demon.

The clash appears to have taken place in the first instance over territory. At least one Sanskrit text attributes the war between the Devas and the Asuras to a dispute over land. The Devas, who lost the war, left Iran to the Asuras, and moved east. Hindu mythology represents the victory of the Asuras as an usurpation of

the heaven of their own gods, and in the fully developed legend the war is a long-drawn-out affair. The theme of paradise lost and regained is one of the major stories of Hindu mythology, and it must date from the Iranian sojourn of the Indian Aryans. In the stories the gods recover their heaven, through the wisdom, wiles, and magic of their supreme god, and also through the self-sacrifice of an Aryan priest. But in history paradise is lost for ever; and the curse begins to work: In sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life.

There survives in our texts a vague memory that the quarrel may also have been over a question of religion and beliefs. One Sanskrit text speaks of a difference of opinion about the nature of truth, which probably involved the whole range of moral and religious notions. There is also a hint in one of the older Upanishads that the Persians looked on the self or soul (*Atman*) in a very worldly sense, and did not perceive the eternal over-soul in themselves. The Aryans who left Iran may have felt that the majority of their people were taking a disquieting orientation, especially in religious matters, to the Semitic world which was so alien to them.

The thing which the true Aryan resented most in such a change of outlook was the approach to the jealous and intolerant Semitic single God. Even today a Hindu, however ignorant or uneducated he may be, rejects the idea that there can be an exclusive single God, or that truth can be exclusive to one dogma. Our modern sages, traditional or Westernized, hardly realize when they proclaim that all religions are equally true and equally good, that they are only voicing the old Aryan latitudinarianism.

The Rigvedic Aryans had their one God, who had two aspects or, it might even be said, two Persons or Hypostases as to individuality, but he was no slayer of other gods. The Aryan gods could co-exist at different levels, and the supreme god, even if he was not a mere *primus inter pares*, was no more exclusive than the venerable head of a harmonious patriarchal family who gave wise advice,

leaving the fighting to be done by the sons and nephews. This hierarchy of gods was very dear to the Aryans, and knowing what resistance to Christianity the aristocratic Greeks and Romans put up even after its official adoption, one can easily understand the scandalization of the early Aryan.

Therefore, when the bulk of the Aryans in Iran showed signs of creating an intolerant single God, those who did not approve moved out, and migrated to India with their gods and the hymns in which they praised these gods, to be free to keep the religion of their fathers, and have unlimited land to till and graze their cattle on.

The colonization of the Punjab and imposition of their domination and culture on the pre-existing peasantry did not set these pioneers a difficult problem. They had already carried out such an operation in Iran. There they had established themselves, their language, and their culture so thoroughly that no trace of the supplanted way of life survived, and no racial antagonisms were created. The older inhabitants were absorbed and raised to a higher cultural level by the invading warrior folk. The process had only to be repeated in the Punjab, and it was.

It is difficult to say whether the imposition and the assimilation in both the regions were made easy by ethnic or linguistic affinities. The introduction and adoption of a language of the Indo-European family could hardly have been as slow and gradual here as it was in Greece, for neither old Persian nor old Sanskrit presents dialectal layers as does the Greek language in the earliest epochs. Both were very homogeneous, and in no distant past even these two might have been one. This would suggest a relatively quick imposition of Indo-European speech and the connected culture. Certainly, no process which was spread over centuries or millennia could have failed to exhibit a stratification in language. On the other hand, the imposition was so thorough, and to all appearance so easy and natural, that it could hardly have been brought

about without some affinity between the newcomers and the older inhabitants. One is tempted by this to postulate a slow proto-Aryan expansion all over the Middle East, including the Punjab, before the coming of the true, fighting Aryans. But, of course, it is impossible to be sure about such an assumption.

The Vedic Aryans settled down in the Punjab, but they could not remain satisfied with it, nor confined to it. For one thing, they were a restless warrior folk with a *wanderlust*. Next, they had come into India, not simply as an aristocracy, but as a complete society. They did indeed have two superior and what might be called 'leader' classes—the priests and the fighters, but the body of the community was composed of what they themselves called *Vish*, the people, who carried on all the normal economic activities. For such a community the Punjab, being already populated by agriculturists, could not offer enough room. Lastly, they must have wanted to make a final break with the Mesopotamian and western association. They had left the region between the Euphrates and Tigris, where their way of life lay under the shadow of an alien and superior civilization which was unacceptable to them in everything but its technology. They had also left Iran, and the reason was, partly at least, the resurgence of the Mesopotamian affiliation. Even the Punjab, unless anchored to something heavier towards the east, looked westward. So, they had to find a new country to create a world of their very own and to be mentally free, and they moved beyond the Sutlej into the territory between that river and the Ganges. This, they made the centre of their existence and base for further expansion in India. With the shifting of the Aryans towards the east, began that curious historical and cultural ambivalence for the Punjab which has continued down to our times. Henceforth the region was to remain divided between the Indian world and the Middle Eastern, facing both ways.

The main body of the Aryans in India broke so completely with the West that, reading their history, legends, and traditions a student might be led to think that the Aryan invasion of India was a fiction invented by the scholars of the West to insult the ancient civilization of the Hindus. Orthodox and traditional Hindus even today repudiate and get angry at the idea that the Aryans came from outside and were not always in India since the beginning of creation. Those among the Hindu 'Fundamentalists' who are not absolutely uneducated and have heard of the diffusion of the Indo-European languages, would rather believe that Europe got its languages and cultures from India than admit that anything Hindu could come from any source outside India.

The lapse of race memory is illustrated in a very interesting manner by the two great epics of the Hindus, the Ramayana and the Mahabharata. It may be assumed, and with some confidence, that the first is the earlier story, and it is the story of the siege of a Middle Eastern fortified city by an Aryan hero or host. But its extra-Indian historical basis was forgotten so quickly and completely after the coming of the Aryans to India, that it got mixed up with the tradition of the colonization of the south in an incongruous and anachronistic hotchpotch. The story lost its historical significance and became a mere didactic poem. On the other hand, the Mahabharata, with its theme of the tribal warfare of the early Aryans after their settlement in India, became the primary book of the national myth, the true corpus of Indo-Aryan traditions.

With the advance to the Ganges began the second phase of the Aryan expansion in India. From their base in the Karnal plain they spread rapidly eastward across virtually uninhabited territory, settling down in tribal blocks, until they were held up by the marshes of Bengal. The quick Aryanization of northern India, which came to be called Aryavarta, 'the land of the Aryans', was brought about by a combination of the restless pioneer-

ing spirit of the Aryans as well as their thirst for virgin land. The process is comparable to the expansion of the European settlers from the east coast of the United States to the farthest west.

As soon as the settlement of northern India was completed, the Aryans launched the third phase of their expansion, which took them to the south. But it was not from the centre of Aryan India that the Deccan was colonized. The movement was led by the pioneers and marchers from the eastern part of the Gangetic plain, the region which is now known as Oude. The priests set the example of going south, and as in other ages and other countries, the missionaries were followed by the warriors and settlers. The colonizers avoided the direct route to the Deccan because it was difficult, and taking a south-westerly route crossed Central India through the region which was known later as Malwa, and reached the head-waters of the Godavari river. From there they marched along the rivers and spread over those parts of the Deccan which suited their economy and temperament. The Aryan colonization of Ceylon was a later and independent venture.

But in the south the character of the Aryan settlement was substantially different from what it was in the north. In northern India the Aryans were the largest and the dominant community, and the Gangetic plain was, above all, *their* country. In the Deccan, on the contrary, even on the plains there were aboriginal populations which were large by the standards of the age. So there could be no question of totally suppressing them, still less of supplanting them. Thus, if the Aryanization of the north was like the colonization of North America or Australia by Europeans, the position of the Aryans in the south resembled that of the Europeans in South Africa. They were a civilized minority among a large and barbarous native majority. The Darks were reduced to servitude as untouchable labourers in large numbers, though in the hills many survived as free men.

From this circumstance of their colonization the Aryans of the south developed a sense of being somewhat different from their kinsmen in the north, and though they never developed any sense of emotional detachment from these relatives as modern Americans have done in regard to Europe, they were not ashamed to be colonials standing on their own. Naturally, in later times, this culminated in the creation of a vigorous southern and colonial form of the Hindu civilization of the Aryavarta. There the Aryans even came to be called *Dravidah,* Dravidians, after the name of the original inhabitants of the south or the south itself. This was analogous to the Dutch colonists calling themselves Afrikaner (or Afrikander) and English colonists Australians. When in subsequent times the Aryans of the north spoke of Dravidians they meant their own people in the south, not the Darks. Nowadays the older Dravidians, when the word is used at all, are distinguished from the Aryan Dravidians by being called *Adi-Dravida,* which means 'original Dravidians'.

The sense of being different from their northern cousins developed further from a serious incompleteness in the Aryan colonization of the south. Though the Aryans settled in the Deccan, they did not succeed in imposing their speech as thoroughly there as they had done in the north. This in the end led even to the abandonment by them of the pure Aryan speech in everyday life, also in popular culture, though never in the higher spheres of religion and civilization. It must not be forgotten that the Hindus of South India, taken as a whole, are more familiar with Sanskrit even now than those of Hindustan, the old Aryavarta.

At some stage, it is difficult to determine exactly when, the southern Aryans began to use the local language or languages, interspersed with a large number of Sanskrit and Sanskritic words, and this mixture evolved into the so-called Dravidian languages. There is an exact parallel to this linguistic evolution in the growth of Urdu in northern India among the Muslims. The Muslim conquerors at

first spoke only Persian or Turkish in India, and when in the early part of the eighteenth century a Muslim nobleman belonging to a family settled in India for a long time, spoke in Hindustani or Urdu at the court of Muhammad Shah, it was resented by the other noblemen. The offender, who was somewhat of a buffoon, justified his lapse by saying that it was better to speak good Hindustani than bad Persian. Urdu is thus a sort of linguistic mulatto, and the original sin has never gone out of it, for in its purer and more cultured form it never ceased to be an affectation of Arabic and Persian by Muslims who could not speak those languages. Tamil and the other South Indian languages were never so feeble, but they are still linguistic hybrids created by the Aryan colonizers of the south. When speaking to the whole of India as Hindus, the South Indians never spoke in anything but Sanskrit, and I have heard South Indian professors of Sanskrit in Calcutta speaking to their colleagues in a Sanskrit which the northerners could never rival.

The Aryan settlement in India in both its aspects, that is to say, in the Aryanization of the Indo-Gangetic plain and the establishment of colonists in the south, was completed in all its essential features most probably by the end of the seventh century B.C. With it the basic ethnic pattern of India, whose most outstanding feature is the opposition between the civilized community of Aryan descent and the primitive Darks, was firmly established.

By that time, it would seem, the Aryans had added a new class to their original social organization in *three* classes, and become the *four*-class society which the Hindu community has remained ever since, at least in theory. To this class, Hindu sacred law gave the legal status of Sudra, the fourth caste. It is, however, extremely difficult to discover the real ethnic affiliations of the Sudras. On the one hand, they are not to be confused with the Darks, free or unfree. The servile Darks were untouchable; the Sudras, though theoretically servile in function, were not so: they were part of Hindu society, not outside it. On

the other hand, within that society, they were to be distinguished from the main mass of the true Aryans, the Vaisyas, who were peasants, traders, cattle-raisers, and artisans at the same time. Few of the people to whom our sacred law gave the status of Sudra have described themselves as such. Most often they give a vocational name to their caste. For instance, I am a Sudra in the light of sacred law, but my family has for centuries called themselves Kayastha, Scribes. Recently many fancy names have been adopted by those who used to be regarded as Sudras. They may have been poor relations of the Aryans, or distantly related to them by blood. The only point which is certain is, however, this: they were given a place within the Aryan society, though as *clientes* and not as full citizens.

India now enters written history, and with that I feel I am treading on land. Nobody could be more conscious than I am that, so far, I have been walking on very thin ice, if not gone under through a hole in it. Students of Indian history must have been wondering at my statements, and even more at my silences. I would, however, assure them that I have not written without a sense of responsibility. So few definite data are available on the earliest periods of Indian history that a number of equally plausible reconstructions of it can be offered with perfect honesty. But the actual historical evolution could have followed only *one* course. Therefore a writer, unless he is resigned to a feckless neutrality or wants to air a barren agnosticism, has to make a choice, and I have made mine.

I shall, however, indicate one of the principles which I have followed. It is this: that nothing could have happened in the earliest ages of Indian history which was not consistent, in the first instance, with what was happening in Western Asia, about which we are more or less well-informed, and then with the known and patent facts of ethnic and cultural distribution in present-day India. If this principle is applied with some amount of rigour, most of the very fine-spun theories about the early history of India are bound to melt in the thin air.

But not all the reconstructions of early Indian history, and even of later periods, can be described as being honestly mistaken. Prepossessions and mental reservations of all kinds have had a free run, and a fair number of spectres like the Piltdown Man skulk in the haunted house of Indian history. I should have liked to rid the whole house of them, but having taken a lifetime only to exorcise myself, I have neither time nor strength left. I must therefore be resigned to being called a fool by those who believe in ghosts, and also by those who trade in them. Historical conferences in India always remind me of seances.

But to resume the story. For about four hundred years after the completion of their settlement the Aryans in India had a respite from ethnic incursions, and from problems created by racial impacts. Of course, during this period, too, there were foreign invasions, mostly by Persians and Greeks, but this impact was military and political, not ethnic. The problems of racial and cultural assimilation it raised were contained within the four corners of civilized life. The ethnic results of these incursions were of a minor order, concerning individuals rather than groups. A few Persians and Greeks may have Hinduized, just as a number of Hindus may also have Medized or Hellenized. On the other hand, to my thinking, the cultural results were very important. These invasions, and the political relations that they brought into existence, put the Hindus in touch with the high civilization of the Persians and the higher one of the Greeks.

This phase of the external relations of the Hindus was, however, followed by another with a wholly different aspect. From the first century B.C. a new series of foreign invasions began. It not only brought into existence an ethnic ferment of a very active sort, but also brought Hindu society face to face with an external proletariat of barbarous or semi-barbarous nomads, in addition to the internal proletariat of the Darks. The Hindus were henceforth compelled to fight for the survival of their society on two fronts, and the only mitigating circumstances was

that on the whole a *modus vivendi* with the internal proletariat of the Darks had been arrived at and the war on that front was almost 'all quiet'.

The irruption of the barbarous nomads and semi-nomads from Central Asia left a permanent impress on the Hindu mind and outlook, confirming the self-consciousness which even before these invasions was aggressive. Previously, face to face with the aboriginals, the Hindus had already formed themselves into a closed society based on birth, but they had done so as conquerors, who were superior to the natives in race and civilization.

On the contrary, the barbarians from Central Asia came as conquerors, and when not beaten back by an Aryan hero behaved as conquerors. Their domination intolerably humiliated the proud Hindu order, and it was in dealing with them that it added to its intense pride of race and culture, that violent xenophobia which henceforward became a fixed trait of the Hindu outlook. The compound of fear, hatred, contempt, and humiliation was embodied in the notion of Mlechchha, the unclean and uncivilized foreigner. The Hindus turned to their great preserving god, Vishnu, for succour, and the idea of a tenth incarnation of the god was born. He was Kalki, about whom the poet Jayadeva wrote:

Mlechchha-nivaha-nidhane
Kalayasi karavalam,
Dhumaketum'iva kim'api karalam:
Kesava-dhritah Kalki-sarirah :
Jaya Jagadisa Hare!

which translated means:

For slaughtering the Mlechchha horde
Wieldest Thou Thy waving sword,
Like a comet, Oh! how awesome:
In Kalki's body Vishnu come:
Victory to Vishnu, the World's Lord!

It is quite possible that an actual Hindu king, Skandagupta or Yasodharman, both destroyers of the abomin-

able Huns, was deified as the Kalki incarnation. The Sanskrit poet whom I have quoted puts him in the past by using the familiar participial past tense of Sanskrit, and the use of the future tense in the Puranas means nothing, because in them the future is used for recording past events in order to give the statements an eschatological character. However, Kalki was to pass into the future later in order to meet another emotional requirement.

It was also on account of the barbarian invasions that the Hindus lost their readiness and faculty of learning from foreign nations. They had never hesitated to borrow from the Persians and Greeks, and also perhaps from the Romans, but after passing through the epoch of barbarian invasions they ceased to believe that any foreign nation had any civilization, and became insufferably conceited. The extreme of this development was noted in the eleventh century by the great Muslim scholar Alberuni, who wrote: 'Their haughtiness is such that, if you tell them of any science or scholar in Khurasan and Persis, they will think you to be both an ignoramus and a liar.' But he is also careful to add that 'their ancestors were not as narrow-minded as the present generation is'.

But there is another side to the matter. Strange as it might seem, the epoch of the barbarian invasions was the only period in their historical existence in which the Hindus showed any inclination or capacity to absorb non-Hindus in their society, and it is this exceptional phenomenon which has lent some plausibility to the idea that they possessed an extraordinary capacity to assimilate foreigners and bring about a racial synthesis. Actually, the historical situation left them with no choice, and the barbarian must also have been very, very willing—he wanted a rise in the cultural scale, and was granted it. Kanishka, the first emperor of the Kushana dynasty, might be compared to Theodoric the Ostrogoth, while his grandson Vasudeva became completely Hinduized.

The Hinduization of all the barbarians, including the repulsive Huns, tranquillized the collective Hindu mind

for the time being, and laid the spectre of barbarian domination. As a result the xenophobia which had been created by the invasions ceased to poison the internal existence of the Hindus and passed to the outer line of defence against foreigners outside India. But its basic character had been fixed, and in the new historical situation which was to arise within a few centuries, it was to be revived in a much more violent and virulent form.

But before I come to that I should like to say a few words about the method by which the Hindus absorbed the barbarians. That was accomplished through an extension of the caste system, and it was in absorbing them that the system acquired its third degree of complexity to become wholly amorphous. It has been said that feudalism in Europe was an organization of the anarchy which followed the break-up of the Carolingian Empire. In India the caste system organized, not one kind of anarchy, but many. Hindu society did not attempt to suppress the immense range of racial, social, cultural, and economic diversities which history, was creating for it in unending succession. On the contrary, it accepted them, gave to each its place and niche, and brought into existence a living association of human groups of all sorts, which was a federation of its parts, without ever trying to be any *one* thing.

Caste system is the name given to this federation. It is, however, less a system than a method. It is, in principle, an extension of the zoological pattern consisting of species in their articulated hierarchy to differentiations which are not zoological or genetic. As such, it certainly imposed the limitation of heredity on the individual's free choice of a human function. But how many do, in actual fact, want to decide this question freely, or for that matter are even aware that there is freedom to choose? One might also say that the attempt to stabilize differences which are social or cultural by putting them into the zoological mould is not confined to the Hindus. In a more or less rigid fashion all human communities have attempted this. This is a natural compensation for man's convergent zoological

evolution and divergent psychological evolution. He wants to make up for his inability to create new zoological species among the Hominidae or the genus Homo by creating psychological species and giving to these the status and fixity of genetic groups.

In such an attempt the Aryan in India only went to the extreme point of making the genetic principle absolutely binding, and to this they were driven by a historical necessity. There was no other way in which they could preserve their ethnic, social, and cultural personality from being submerged in a conglomeration with the native Darks. They could no more countenance such a possibility than today Europeans in Africa can contemplate any submergence in the dark population. All human groups behave in this way when seriously faced with such a menace, and all develop a conviction of the sanctity of birth and blood. The Aryans in India carried the attitude to its logical extreme, the extreme demanded by the dangerous situation in which they were placed. So, they made heredity a principle of ordering, not only race relations, but all kinds of relation and functions, even the economic.

It follows from this that so long as Hindu society continued to grow, the caste system also went on evolving *pari passu*. Let me state one thing emphatically and once and for all: nowhere and at no time did the caste system have a norm, or any finality. It remained elastic, and its expansibility was seen in more than one direction. To give only one instance here, the assimilation of the foreign barbarian through the caste system had as its counterpart a partial promotion of the Darks to the Hindu status. Such aboriginals as showed any capacity or desire for a superior kind of life were not denied admission into Hindu society. But there was no fixed rule for the extension of the caste system to non-Hindus. Sometimes the foreigner or aboriginal was admitted to one of the superior castes on the strength of his vocation or worldly power—foreign priests naturally became Brahmins and foreign princes Kshatriya —and sometimes a whole community of foreigners became

a separate caste. The application of the caste system was wholly empiric.

No social system has had a greater volume of feeble didactic nonsense thrown at itself. First of all, there is the charge that the caste system has been creating diversity and disunity. But the institution, as it has been worked through the ages, has never done so: it has only organized the disparities created by historical forces and movements. By so doing it has done great good by reducing the competition of the diversities, by freezing them within certain limits, and by making each not only legitimate but even moral. After assigning to each element of society its proper function or status, or rather recognizing the function and status it had arrived at through evolution, the Hindu social system made adherence to these a sacred duty. Hinduism declared that death was preferable in one's own *dharma* (vocation, aptitude, *natura*, assigned function, etc.), and that the *dharma* of others was to be greatly feared.

For this reason the caste system may be described as a symbiosis in human life on the lines of the zoological. It canalized competitions and helped the co-existence of elements which otherwise would have been at war. It was a social system specially suited to a country like India, which history has made into a warehouse of civilizations, and a *couloir* and *cul-de-sac* of diverse peoples and cultures.

Let me take up next the charge that it interferes with economic freedom. No one who has even a superficial knowledge of the caste system will ever say that it has come in the way of a choice of livelihood. Brahmins in India have been kings, priests, statesmen, warriors, traders, and peasants, and all these they still can be and are. Sudras have been kings. One of the wealthiest families in Bengal, the members of which I used to know intimately in Calcutta, were technically untouchable in Hindu society.

Coming to the last charge, that it bars the way to talent, I shall only quote an Englishman, who knew India at first

hand, and was one of the greatest administrators the East India Company had. Writing about the caste system in his history of India he thought it necessary to set down the following:

The caste system has by no means so great an effect in obstructing the enterprise of individuals as European writers are apt to suppose. There is, indeed, scarcely any part of the world where changes of condition are so sudden and so striking as in India. The last Peshwa had, at different times, two prime ministers; one of them had been either an officiating priest or a singer in a temple (both degrading employments), and the other was a Sudra, and originally a running footman. The Raja of Jeypur's prime minister was a barber. The founder of the reigning family of Holcar was a goatherd; and that of Sindia a menial servant; both were Sudras. The great family of Rastia in Maratta country first followed the natural occupation of Bramins, then became great bankers, and at length, military commanders. Many similar instances of elevation might be quoted. The changes of professions in private life are no less observable.

So Mountstuart Elphinstone, and I could add to the list. It was always so in the whole history of the caste system. That it suppresses talent is a figment of the shallow egalitarian imagination.

The social immobility for which the caste system was made a scapegoat was really the product of the stagnation which was created in the social life of the Hindus by the Pax Britannica, and the suppression of talent laid at its door was almost wholly due to British rule. As the English military historian Kaye said in connexion with the military profession: 'It was the inevitable tendency of our increasing power in India to oust the native functionary from his seat, or lift him out of his saddle so that the White man might fix himself there.' This happened in

most fields, and, above all, in public life, and the caste system was ready to hand to bear the blame.

If the system suppressed anything it was only ambition unrelated to ability, and watching the mischief from this kind of ambition in India today I would say that we could do with a little more of the caste system in order to put worthless adventurers in their place. Taking the system as a whole I would describe it as a social organization which contributes to order, stability, and regulation of competition, and I would close the digression with a piece of advice to the foreign reformers of Hindu society, and their Hindu imitators: Please keep your tongues and pens off the caste system. If I could believe that the caste system was going to be destroyed in India by the palaver I would have added: 'Please do not pulverize a society which has no other force of cohesion, into amorphous dust.' But since there is no danger whatever to the caste system, I would only say: 'Don't make fools of yourselves.'

But successful as the caste system was in assimilating the barbarian invaders, it failed totally to cope with the next series of ethnic incursions from outside, which were set in train by the expansion of Islam. This historical movement threatened to bring the Hindus under subjection to the newly risen empire of the Caliphate, and annex India to the Islamic world. But in the first or Arab phase of the expansion, only Sind and possibly some other parts of the Trans-Indus were lost to the Hindus. It was only when the Turks took over the political and military leadership of the Islamic world that India passed finally under Muslim rule. As a result the Muslims were established in India as a society parallel to that of the Hindus.

No adjustment between these two societies took place except in minor matters, and therefore with the Muslim conquest the country also saw the emergence of the second basic ethnic cleavage in its population. In its emotional aspect the new division was infinitely more embittered than the old opposition between the primitives and the civilized Hindus. Though the previous antithesis was more

fundamental from the anthropologist's point of view it did not generate a fraction of the venom which the Hindu-Muslim enmity engendered. Its immediate effect was a revivification in an intense form of the Hindu xenophobia created by the barbarian invasions, and one of the very interesting features of this revivification was the shuffling of the Kalki incarnation from the past to the future. He became a part of the Hindu apocalypse and eschatology, as a sort of Hindu Imam Mahdi. This animosity has inflicted irreparable harm on the country, and it is as active *today* as it ever was in the past, and as toxic.

Yet the sad truth is that it could never have been otherwise. Like the curse of the Atridae or the curse of the Kurus, this was inherent in the destiny of the Hindus. It is so frightening even to contemplate the cleavage that modern Hindus have always denied it, and do so even now. They invariably declare that the two communities are one, and as one of the proofs of this assertion they advance the fact that the Muslims took Hindu women as wives or concubines. I do not apologize for referring again and again to the infatuated Hindu belief in the oneness of the Hindus and Muslims, because until this idea has been squashed once and for all there can be no progress in Hindu-Muslim relations, which include, of course, India's political relationship with Pakistan—the notorious millstone round the neck of Indian foreign policy.

Now for the reasons behind the Hindu-Muslim conflict. The Muslim conquest of India could not be made innocuous for the Hindus through the caste system. The conquest was an extension into a new country of a well-established and mature society, with a fully developed way of life and a living culture. The final conquest of India was the adventure of a Muslim king whose main territories lay outside India, but even when the subordination of the new Muslim empire to an external Muslim kingdom was ended, as it very soon was, Muslim rule in the country remained the rule of a colonizing people who never forgot their affiliation with the wider Islamic world.

What was even more important was the fact that the Muslims were not barbarians at a low level of culture who would consider admission to the Hindu fold as a promotion. On the contrary, not only were they themselves the creators and defenders of a new and aggressive culture, they had a fanatical conviction of its superiority to all others, and thought it was their duty to propagate it even by force. Their religion did, in fact, make this one of the essential, though optional, duties of a Muslim. They were the first people in history to put forward the idea of an irreconcilable conflict between a particular way of life and all others, and to formulate a theory of permanent revolution. There could be no peace on earth, they declared, until the whole world was converted to their faith.

As if that was not enough, the Hindus on their side had an almost equal contribution to make. By the time the new invasions began, they had, as I have noted, completely lost whatever assimilating power and adaptability they had, and hardened into a closed society with a conviction of its own superiority which amounted to megalomania. There could thus be no question of absorbing even a neutral foreigner, let alone a Muslim.

It follows from this that the cleavage which the Muslim conquest created in the ethnic composition of India was more cultural than racial. Of course, there were new racial elements, such as Arabs, Persians, Turks, Afghans, and Tatar-Mongols, among whom the Turks were probably the most numerous. But these foreigners formed only the hard core of the Muslim society of India, and its bulk was formed by Hindu converts, especially in Bengal and the Punjab. This fact has been fantastically exploited to prove the oneness of the Hindus and Muslims. But speciousness is hardly ever able to do away with facts, though it does come in the way of dealing with them sensibly. The fact that they were converted Hindus did not make any difference to the sense of solidarity of the Muslims of India among themselves and with the Islamic world at large. The descendants of the Hindu converts never thought that

they were nearer to the native Hindus than their foreign co-religionists.* The Hindus, too, wrote off the converts and refused to look upon them as members of a common society. The parting of ways was the work of both the sides. Here is a case of a true ethnic relationship being completely broken by a new cultural and social association.

Compared with the result of the Islamic conquest, the effect of the European expansion in India can only be described as unimportant, and therefore I can sum up its ethnic consequences very briefly. These may be divided into two categories, the genetic and the cultural. In the genetic field, European rule in India has created two types of mixed communities: a truly Mestizo population in those parts of India which were once ruled by the Portuguese, and in British India a cross-breed known as Eurasians in the old days but now called Anglo-Indians. In the cultural sphere, the British conquest has brought into existence a community of Indian Christians who till now are standing apart from the Hindus. But the most important result of British rule in the way of creating human diversity has been the creation of a Westernized Hindu upper middle-class. Most foreigners like to think that this class will reshape India and the Hindu community in the image of the countries and peoples who are contributing foreign economic aid. I shall have something to say about that in a later chapter. Here I shall restrict myself to the observation that all the new elements in the population of India created by the expansion of Europe have brought into existence problems for themselves, and not for Hindu society.

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* In actual fact, the converts or Muslims with a pre-existing Hindu affiliation were even more hostile to the way of life which was once theirs. The Mogul Emperor Shah Jahan was the son of a Hindu princess, but he was very intolerant of the Hindus. Murshid Quli Khan, one of the most successful Muslim rulers of Bengal, was converted to Islam in childhood, and he was notoriously anti-Hindu. A Muslim friend of mine was the son of a woman who before her conversion was a Brahmin. She was bitterly opposed to Hinduism.

Chapter 3

THE CHILDREN OF CIRCE

THE Romans had a god or demigod whom they called Sylvanus. He was a sort of faun and sometimes identified with the satyrs and sileni of the Greeks or even with Pan. He lived on uncultivated land beyond the limits of tillage. He was elusive, uncanny, full of wiles, and dangerous in some ways. Now, if these were the adjectives applied to Sylvanus, whose name itself—*He of the Forest*—was an adjective and epithet, there were none which could suit the dark aboriginals of India better from the point of view of the Aryans. They had a streak of superstitious dread mingled with their dislike of the Darks, whom they described as 'men of the forests'. One Sanskrit verse refers to them as 'wanderers in the woods and friends to their womenfolk'. The second description too was apt.

The Darks of India in their existence through the ages remind me strongly of Papageno. To no set of men could life set a harder problem of survival. The country was wild and inhospitable, the climate and weather inclement, the beasts strong, swift, and ferocious. Existence on earth presented itself to them in the shape of an ugly old woman with a croaking voice who asked for a kiss: the aboriginal gave it out of courage and compassion, and was rewarded with beauty. Without seeing them and their life nobody would have found it easy to believe that man could combine, of all things, hunting, love, and wisdom so harmoniously. They made themselves at home in the hills and jungles, adjusted themselves meticulously to the climate, and literally dug up happiness as they do water in the sands of their streams. There are many peoples on earth who are consumed by an insatiable craving for unhappi-

ness and cannot have enough of it. But the aboriginals of India had happiness in the blood, and in their free state neither would nor could be cured of it.

Nevertheless they might well have been unhappy, for human reasons in addition to the climatic and zoological. Throughout known history that terrible blight of all primitive peoples—nearness to a high civilization—has hung over them, and they might have died of the wilt, damping off, and dry rot which this contagion always brings on. Besides, they had to face the implacable enmity of the Aryans, who hated them as agricultural folk hate hunters, as dwellers among fields and pastures hate foresters, as plainsmen hate hillmen, as fair people hate the dark, as civilized men hate savages.

This holds as true of the Hindu of today as it did of the Aryan, say, of 1000 B.C. The generalization would seem to be invalidated by the publicized attitude of the present Hindu ruling class, but remains true in spite of it. Whenever the Westernized Hindu is found airing a liking for the aboriginals, it may be assumed that he is affecting a British attitude as the legatee of British imperialism, in whose arcana they had a very special place. When this class of Hindus show any solicitude for the welfare of the primitive tribes, or even any intellectual interest in them, they are even more affected. The pose is transparent.

As proof of this I shall give precisely that instance which is likely to come to the mind of those who would contradict me: that is, the annual folk dance festival in Delhi. The whole of the Diplomatic Corps and all resident foreigners go into ecstasies over it, and the least than an Anglicized Indian can do is to imitate them. But the festival was begun by the British military authorities after the last war, and I saw one of the earliest of them, if not the very first, in the spring of 1947. The bright idea was simply continued by a set of people whose strongest point as a ruling class is their loyalty to all the British imperial traditions. The true parentage of the festival is even now dis-

closed by the fact that it remains in military hands, though there is a Ministry of Culture which considers dancing of all kinds to be under its exclusive jurisdiction.*

The Indians who rush to these folk dances are actuated, when sincere, by the lingering Anglicism within them, and, when not, by their anxiety to win the good opinion of the foreigners on which their own self-respect very largely depends; and, above all, they are driven by their awe of Jawaharlal Nehru, who as the supreme Anglicized Indian feels strongly about the aboriginals in his own way.

But how exiguous even that way is can be judged from the contradictions of his own statements about them. He has, of course, to sanction military operations against some of them, but he does that *qua Imperator*, *qua* man he sometimes says that the aboriginals are not to be assimilated to Hindu society, at others that they are not to be treated as museum pieces. If neither course is right, one might well ask: *Que diable allait-il faire dans cette galere?* In the India of Nehru's dreams about the future and illusions about the present, the India of reels of Five-Year Plans, the aboriginals, one should have thought, could

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* The artificiality of the interest in folk dance was demonstrated in a clear but at the same time amusing manner when in 1963 the Government of India wanted to collect money for its Defence Fund, and made use of this 'cultural' festival for this purpose. The authorities feared that the tribal dancers would not be an attraction for the larger public they were after, and therefore they replaced the dancers with the film-stars of India. Thus it happened that these popular idols, together with the playback singers and music directors, presented a 'cultural' programme consisting of film songs and also songs composed for the occasion urging people to make sacrifices, put up a solid front, and not to yield ground to China. This time the Ministry of Scientific and Cultural Affairs, which would no longer be kept out of the sun, managed the show in co-operation with the Defence Department. The *tamasha* brought in two and a half lakhs of rupees for the Government. I wonder if the Diplomatic Corps attended and enjoyed this cultural display too.

have only one of two alternative destinies: *Gleichschaltung* or *Gotterdammerung*.

No, says Nehru, they are to be treated as human beings. Now, this is dangerously like Mr E. M. Forster's plea for putting Indo-British relations on a *human* footing in that novel of his—*A Passage to India*—which made Liberal and Leftist Englishmen lachrymose to no purpose. It is not as easy to stack human relations away from politics as it is to stow wine-cases away from the boilers. If men could forget their cultural loyalties, political ambitions, pride of race and of power, as well as economic urges, they would, of course, become as easy to pack together as layers of surgical cotton-wool. But human beings will not sterilize themselves or convert themselves into cellulose. They would make distinctions. Only, if they are honest and courageous they would avow these; if not, hypocritically hide their real feelings.

Whatever other vices the ancient Hindus might have possessed, hypocrisy was the one which they never had. It had to come to the modern Hindus, along with the prudery which is only slightly less offensive, from the West, as also did tobacco, cocaine, and syphilis. So, the Hindus of olden times never disguised their hatred of the aboriginals, and made no bones about proclaiming it. They were very Kiplingian, and they declared: 'Oh, Dark is Dark, and Fair is Fair, and never the twain shall meet.' Like Kipling, again, they had an afterthought and made an exception. I shall describe what that was, but at this point I am concerned only with the antipathy, with the awareness of an uncrossable line.

From the beginning the Aryans were both frightened and fascinated by the aboriginals. Naturally, until they were established in the country in unchallenged power, they felt the hatred more than the attraction. At that stage, when the aboriginal was still to be feared, they must have been inclined to think, like the early settlers in

Anglo-Saxon North America who were not ashamed to be the full-blooded colonists which they were, that the only good Dark was the dead Dark. But after they had made their position secure they arrived at a compromise with the aboriginals on the basis of leaving to each party its life and its world. Then began a phase of alternating fascination and repulsion for the Aryans.

In a Sanskrit story, written probably in the seventh century of the Christian era, the daughter of a king of hunters comes to seek audience of an Aryan king. When the woman door-keeper brings in the message the king looks at the faces of his vassals and remarks: 'What harm is there in seeing her?' But when the princess of the hunting tribe enters he orders the door-keeper: 'Show her to us from a distance.' Of course, he does so for fear of being polluted by the nearness of a person who to him, an Aryan, was an untouchable Chandala maiden. However, the princess of low birth overwhelms the king and his court by her beauty. All the imagery of admiration which occurs to them is drawn from the highest levels of the Hindu aesthetic and religious feelings.

She is like a moving statue of sapphire; like the night lit up by the moon; like the river Yamuna, dark and still; like the spouse of Siva in the robe of a huntress; like Lakshmi with a blue sheen reflected from the body of Vishnu; and with her hands and feet dyed red with lac, she is like the great goddess Durga after she had slain the demon Mahisha. The similes roll out in florid Sanskrit to describe the dangerous attractions of a hunter maiden for the Aryan, who could not even touch her without insulting and sullying his Aryan birth and honour.

A thought, natural in a race-conscious Aryan, occurs to the wondering king: 'Oh, how could the Creator place so much beauty in so unworthy a vessel!' He is also unable to make out how the girl can be so fresh, for, if Sanskrit literature is to be believed, the women of the royal households were not only kneaded into dough, but actually squeezed into batter in every limb, by the men-

folk. But the explanation also occurs to the king. He bethinks himself that, fearing lest He should be polluted by her contact, the Creator must have made her without touching her with his hands. Until I read that passage I believed that it was the Nestlé Company which had invented the slogan—'Untouched by hand'—but we Hindus had said that long ago, and how much more befittingly and winningly!

Not less enthusiastic was the Aryan's first feelings about the bodily strength and symmetry of the aboriginal man, and not less strong his subsequent revulsion, when he had had time to reflect. In the same story a Brahmin is born as a parrot for his sins, but even in that lowly form he has not lost his Aryan sensibility. So, one day, when from his hole in a tree he sees a whole host of aboriginal hunters, Sabaras as they are called in Sanskrit, he at first gives expression to his admiration, and then to his horror.

It is the young chief of the hunters, a youth with downy lips and cheeks, who strikes him most. He seems to be made of iron; his long curly hair falls on his shoulders, to make him look like a lion; his waist is girt with a piece of cloth dyed red; his chest is like a slab of rock from the Vindhya mountains; his arms are long; and so on. One bodily feature noticed by the Aryan parrot is specially interesting: the young hunter's belly is wrinkled in tight folds on account of hard physical exercise. What a contrast to the Brahmin Aryan's ghee-fed ample middle!

But the parrot remembers soon enough that it is not for an Aryan to give way to such feelings, forgetting his station in life, and his duty to his race. So he utters a monologue of horror which is so revealing as a summary of the Aryan view of the aboriginal that I give a verbatim translation:

Oh, [cries the parrot] their life is a hallucination of ignorance and errors, their conduct censured by honourable men: for instance, their religion is the offering of human flesh; their food meat, and drink spirits, which is condemned by righteous men; their exercise is hunting;

their hymns are the howls of jackals; their wisdom is knowledge of the ways of birds; their friends are the dogs; their kingdoms are the wild woods; drinking bouts are their festivity; their helpers are merciless bows; their tools are snake-like arrows with poisoned heads; their songs are a lure for the deer; their wives are women captured from other tribes; tigers are their company; the blood of animals is their offering to gods; their sacrifice is flesh; their livelihood is robbery; their ornaments are snakes; their cosmetic is the ichor of wild elephants; in every way they devastate the forests in which they dwell.

I do not think that any modern anthropologist could describe the aboriginals of India better and in more precise detail. One thing in the Aryan's admiration of the aboriginal's physical beauty is to be specially noted. All modern Hindus are obsessed with a fair complexion, and they cannot see any beauty in a person who is not fair. The ancient Hindus were free from this inhibition. This is significant.

The admiration for the aboriginal gradually died out among the Hindus, keeping pace with the decay of their sensibilities, and only the abhorrence remained. But the quality of the antipathy also became extremely poor. The world of the aboriginal was an ensemble of human and non-human features which excited a respectful horror and hatred in the Aryan Hindu. It was a whole formed by hills, forests of large trees with chequered shade, the burning tiger and the impassive elephant, strong and brave though dangerous and cruel men, and women who were even more dangerous because of the seductiveness coming from their joy of the flesh without its shame. If all this evoked fear it was accompanied by fascination, and the fascination of horror and disapproval can only be felt by live and noble minds. But it was precisely vitality and nobility which the Hindus went on losing quickly, and with that their concept of the aboriginal also became vulgar, and equally vulgar their hatred of him. For the decadent Hindus the great world of the

aboriginal took on the appearance of a mere weedy waste by the side of cultivated fields.

British rule brought back the respect for the aboriginal among those Hindus who had received the new education. But the feeling was very artificial, and, besides, it was confined to a small minority. Hindu society as a whole held on to the vulgar dislike, and I shall try to illustrate it by setting down a few of the remarks I heard myself in my young days.

We in Bengal had the aboriginals abutting on us both to the east and to the west. The Darks were our western neighbours, and the Mongoloids the eastern. All over West Bengal the Sonthals, Oraons, and other primitives of Chota Nagpur were called Buno (pronounced *Boonoe*), wild people, in Bengali. In East Bengal, especially in Mymensingh district from which I come, any wild and unkempt person was called a Garo or a Hajong. Bhutia, Lepcha, Kuki, and other tribal names were equally terms of contempt or abuse.

The Khasis of Assam were certainly not a savage people. Their women were decidedly pretty, and it was believed that the British officials and officers stationed at Shillong had a very great weakness for them. That affiliation, instead of redeeming the Khasis in the eyes of the Bengali clerks and their wives, damned them still further. They were regarded as a dirty and uncivilized people. The Hindu contempt for the aboriginals in modern times was not softened even by their notorious lust for their women.

Yet the aboriginals have survived, which seems an incredible achievement. I do not think there is any other country in the world in which primitive communities of so many kinds and with fairly large populations have been able to resist the proximity of civilization so successfully. This, the aboriginals of India have to their credit and not only have they survived, they have even been able to continue their way of life, keep it

largely intact and unimpaired, and maintain themselves in social and cultural health. *Vivat homo silvanus!*

What could have contributed to this? The first reason is obvious and elemental: the Aryan agricultural and pastoral order was not interested in the aboriginal's hills and jungles. At their most adventurous the Aryans sent out a warrior king like Samudragupta through the wildernesses of Central India to impose a tenuous hegemony on hunter chiefs like Vyaghra Raja, Tiger King. From the beginning the primitives entrenched themselves in their terrain, and lived there without being displaced. Human geography was on their side.

Secondly, they showed an amazing adaptability within the framework of their hunting economy. They borrowed techniques from their civilized neighbours just to the point needed to ensure survival, for holding their own, without abandoning their primitive way of life, its spirit, and its social organization in any essential respect. They certainly adopted metals, also animal husbandry, and, partially, agriculture. They even borrowed myths and legends from the civilized Hindus and transformed them into their own in a recast form. But they remained *they*.

This may be described as adaptive evolution by men to whom the door of creative evolution had been closed. They could not become anything new, but they could be more efficient hunters. For me this holds a very important moral. I am often compelled in these days to hear the argument, mostly from Occidentals, but sometimes also from their Oriental echoes, that as a result of industrialization which will rescue the peoples of India from a state which these kind Westerners politely and their Hindu disciples boastfully describe as 'under-development', the Hindus will cease to be Hindus—which means that they will lose their traditional outlook and behaviour and become passable Americans. All Occidentals are reckoning on the Americanization of the Hindu, and they cannot even conceive of a Hinduization of industrialism.

But the aboriginals of India seem to lend support to my view that there is no necessary connexion between a certain way of life and economic techniques. I should have thought that this was proved decisively by a fact which no one would dream of disputing—by the plain fact that the United States and the Soviet Union have identical techniques but opposed ways of life. I would say that when the culture of a people has set in a particular mould, whatever that might be, and when it has created its psychological correlatives, their traditional life may survive indefinitely and can even be strengthened by progress in technology. In other words, even if techniques change the collective mind and institutions can continue, actually helped by the economic adaptations which are expected to destroy them.

However that may be, at least there is no doubt that the aboriginals of India have remained primitive even after adopting advanced techniques from the civilized Hindus. But I must also say that the survival of the aboriginals has been helped by another factor, a psychological one. If the two reasons just mentioned, namely, the indifference of an agricultural people to forests and the hunter's adaptability, have saved them there was also something within the heart of the Aryan leader-class which worked towards the same end.

I often wonder why one significant aspect of the victory of agriculturists over hunters has escaped the notice of anthropologists and historians. This is all the more puzzling because one of the worst plagues of agricultural societies has been created by this turn in their evolution. Of course, I mean war. War in civilized societies may be attributed to an 'original sin' of the agriculturists. In order to deal with the hunters they put a new kind of hunters above themselves and allowed them to constitute their ruling class, supporting that order on their land. These hunters were the warriors, who hunted men as a profession and animals for pleasure. Whether they were Samudraguptas, Thutmosises, Ashur-Nasir-pals, Alexand-

ers, Scipios, Condés, or Turennes, does not matter: they were all alike. The Assyrians, the Hindu Kshatriyas, and above all, the *Homo European,* the most advanced and most ruthless of them, have all been destructive in a way which no primitive hunting folk, even in a cannibalic state, have ever rivalled. It was a sad day for everybody concerned—the animals, the old hunters, the agriculturists themselves, when these new hunters appeared in history.

But there was at least one saving grace in the situation. The plight of the *old* hunters would have been much worse if the *new* hunters had not felt that in some ways the primitives were nearer to them than their peasant protégés. Deep calleth unto deep, and chivalry is born. That was at the root of Kipling's famous afterthought:

But there is neither East, nor West, Border, nor Breed,
nor Birth,
When two strong men stand face to face, though they
came from the ends of earth.

The Aryan warrior had exactly the same feeling and, strange as it might seem, this can be illustrated best from the conduct of Rama himself, the supreme Aryan hero in India and the leader of the Aryan colonization of the south. As he was going to the Deccan after being exiled from his father's kingdom, he came on the banks of the Ganges with his wife and brother, and was received by the hunter king Guha. Rama felt no hesitation in accepting his hospitality, and called the hunter his friend. In the Hindu tradition this incident became the stock example of the unfailing courtesy and magnanimity of a true Aryan.

Equally famous is Rama's chivalry towards the huntress Sabari. She had been living in expectation of his coming and had waited nearly a lifetime for it, turning herself into a devout *religieuse.* Upon seeing Rama the huntress said her *nunc dimittis* in the Hindu way, threw herself into fire, and was rewarded by being taken up to heaven.

The Aryan's relations with the hunters were seen at their best when based on a godly compassion on one side, and the most self-sacrificing loyalty on the other, just as in a later age Indo-British relations were at their best when founded on the Hindu soldier's readiness to perish in battles for the British, and the British officer's willingness to call him 'Bhai'—Brother! But like Kipling's exception the Hindu edificatory tales only proved the rule.

There is another famous story, and this from the Mahabharata, which illustrates the cruel dilemma facing the Aryan in India when he had to deal with the hunter's claim to be as good and efficient as an Aryan, even if that claim was accompanied by the most devoted loyalty to the Aryan's ideals and to the Aryan as a man. One day, it is related, the Kuru and Pandava princes, who had the Brahmin Drona as their teacher in archery, went to hunt in a forest. One of their dogs which was scouring the woods came back with its mouth muzzled with a number of arrows shot with an amazing quickness and precision. The princes were astonished by this feat of archery and searched for the man who had performed it. They came on a hunter boy, who said that it was he who had silenced the dog. Asked how he had learnt such marksmanship and shooting, the boy replied that Drona was his master. The Aryan princes felt very mortified that their own teacher had taught a hunter boy better than themselves, and went up to him with their reproaches.

Drona was very much surprised, for he could not remember ever having taught any hunter boy, and indeed he had not. What had happened was this. The hunter boy, hearing of Drona's reputation and wishing to learn from him, had gone to him to be taken as a pupil, but could not, of course, be accepted as he was a non-Aryan and untouchable. So the boy had come back to the forest, set up an image of Drona, worshipped and practised before it, and through sheer devotion acquired his skill. That was why he regarded Drona as his teacher.

Now, it was and still is a custom among the Hindus that a teacher should be recompensed with gifts, which ordinarily were money, land, or cattle. This gift was called *dakshina.* When Drona, who had come to the forest to inquire, found how matters stood, he demanded his dakshina. The boy asked him what he would have. Drona had already made up his mind, for he could not compromise with his duty to his Aryan pupils and to the Aryan community. He unhesitatingly demanded the right thumb of the boy, who cut it off immediately, sacrificing the very skill for which this price was demanded.

The Hindu conscience has never been easy over this incident, and so this non-Aryan boy has always been held up in the traditions of the Hindus as the ideal pupil, and by implication the cruel Aryan duty has been regretted.

But, however heartless Hindu apartheid was, at least it saved the aboriginal, which Hindu egalitarianism, had such a thing existed, would never have done. Also, Kshatriya chivalry softened its harshness. The Muslim continued the policy of leaving the aboriginals to themselves, and the British were bound to follow the same course on account of the very basic principle they had laid down for their government in India. It was the principle, not only of allowing, but encouraging every community in India to live in the light of its own traditions, maintaining its institutions. They did not want even the civilized Hindus and Muslims to be Westernized, and they relished the idea of changing the aboriginals even less. In this they were influenced in the first instance by their conservatism, and next by the sense of imperial interest. They felt instinctively that the varied elements of the populations of India should not lose their diversity and sense of diversity. This helped the aboriginals.

Now, however, a new and much more serious threat has made its appearance for them. They face the prospect of seeing their distinctive way of life wiped off the ethnic map of India, even in their home territory, which makes the wish I set down a little while ago a futile, if not frivol-

ous, gesture of rhetoric. The danger is coming, not from any resuscitation of Aryan or Kshatra imperialism—which perhaps would have done India a lot of good—but from the nature of the technological revolution through which all mankind is passing, and through which the Greatest Powers in the world wish that we should also pass exactly in their manner.

It is a long argument. But I shall try to state it as briefly as possible without sacrificing intelligibility. If the primary economy of man was hunting, secondary pastoralism, and tertiary agriculture, a quaternary economy is now emerging in industrialism, which depends basically, not on what grows on the surface of the earth, but on what lies hidden under it. For ages man dreamt of buried treasures. Did he do so with a premonition of his future destiny, as he did in regard to flying? In any case, he has realized both dreams. To put it in terms of mythology, Pluto is no longer satisfied only with robbing Ceres of her daughter, he has invaded her own domain.

This revolution has now reached India, and here the minerals which it stands in need of are found for the most part in the territories of the aboriginals. Very powerful forces stand behind the movement: the policies, interests, money, and technical skill of nearly all Western nations; the convictions and emotions of the present rulers of the country; and, above all, the all-consuming Hindu avarice. All this in combination is breaking down the isolation of the aboriginal, threatening not only his security but existence. There is a Hindu push towards the wilds, which never existed before, and very large vested interests are being created for the Hindus in the homeland of the primitives. The white ants are on the march. If you have seen them, you will understand.

In my own life I have seen the march of industrialism into the aboriginal's territory. I am quite familiar with the spot where it established its first base, and began the conquest with its most typical feature—co-operation between Indian capital and American technical guidance.

This happened at a place in the Singhbhum district of Chota Nagpur, which came to be named Jamshedpur after the great Parsi business man and financier, who conceived the idea of building the first iron and steel factory of India, and carried it out. The whole area is now generally known as the country of the Adivasis, or 'Original Inhabitants'.

This factory began its operation soon after 1910. Even before that the industrial revolution had made its inroads into the aboriginal's life in the same region. These parts were formerly looked upon as the hinterland of Bengal, but coal seams were discovered here in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, and a large number of collieries founded. I still remember the weird impression which the advance of industrialism made on me when, as a small boy in 1904, I went to Deoghar in the Sonthal Pergannas. From the train I saw hills, the Sonthals and their villages, the smoking chimneys, and the pit-head gear. The *mélange* remains deeply imprinted on my mind.

All the large industrial undertakings of India after independence are growing up, not in Chota Nagpur alone, but elsewhere as well, in areas which are in the occupation of the aboriginals. For me, therefore, the pioneer iron and steel factory at Jamshedpur has become a symbol, which it might also be for others. As one travels by train at night, from quite a long distance, its blast furnaces can be seen shooting up flames. An immense glow lights up the sky, and that red glare seems to rise from the gigantic and unquenchable funeral pyre of the primitives.

Nobody knows better than I how pointless it is to regret this. I would say it is almost foolish to denounce. it. The motives, ideas, and forces which are ranged behind the modern onslaught on the aboriginals belong to an amoral world, where neither ethnics nor aesthetics has any say. In an industrialized India the destruction of the aboriginal's life is as inevitable as the submergence of the Egyptian temples caused by the dams of the Nile.

But perhaps it was permissible to hope that, if the aboriginal was bound to go, he had disappeared in a noble conflagration, like the Viking in his burning ship, and the Mahanadi, Damodar, and Suvarnarekha had risen in flood to wash away his ashes:

But what a wish! As things are going, there can be no grandeur in the primitive's end. It will not be even simple extinction, which is not the worst of human destinies. It is to be feared that the aboriginal's last act will be squalid, instead of being tragic. What will be seen with most regret will be, not his disappearance, but his enslavement and degradation.

What justifies this gloomy foreboding is, in the first instance, the very nature of industrialism, which invariably transforms men of the open spaces into an urban rabble, akin to the slave population of the Graeco-Roman cities. So far in man's existence, human dignity has always been associated with and dependent on scale, spaciousness, and solitude, and congestion in every form has lowered it. Therefore those who have cared for it have also had three hundred and sixty-five bedrooms and half-a-dozen long galleries in their houses. Men can no longer have solitude in roominess; they have even ceased to care for it. With that their dignity is also threatened.

In India, owing to the climate and weather, the correlation between space, solitude, beauty, and human dignity has been even closer. Here crowding mercilessly piles up squalor, while immensity and starkness can raise even the irresistible and choking dust of the Gangetic plain to the height of a sad and ascetic majesty, and make it look like grey snow or hoarfrost, as if it were the material counterpart of that ashen resignation which is perhaps the Hindu's purest mood. But go to any big city

or industrial centre, say the so-called 'Industrial Area' of Delhi which is now growing up, and you will see a transformation of the dust which you would not have believed to be possible. You will be startled to discover that dust also can become suppurative and emit stench. Even the urban Hindu, who is used to squalid conditions, is half-stupefied by this. The aboriginal will be poisoned.

Still, the degradation that is likely to be brought about by the material aspect of the industrial revolution in India will be minor compared with what will be done by the psychological forces at work behind the movement—by the very special nature of the incentives, emotions, and motives which are driving it. This side of the industrializing effort in India is so little known, and yet it is so necessary to take stock of it in order to appraise its possible social consequences, that I do not offer any apology for going into a digression in order to explain what I have in mind.

The industrial revolution in India at its most disinterested is an expression of anti-European and anti-Western nationalism. It is the realization of the desire, and now the policy, of the Hindus to get even with the West and take revenge for the dead European imperialism by adopting its technology and organization. This idea was clearly and consciously formulated by modern Hindu thinkers at the end of the nineteenth century, even before they knew anything about the Meiji Revolution in Japan. Therefore it is not surprising to find that the first active phase of the Indian nationalist movement, which began in 1905, was also an epoch of industrial pioneering for India. The Bengali nationalists founded the first technological teaching institution in India; and Bengali nationalism, by urging the boycott of all cloth of British manufacture, created the textile industry of Gujarat. To the purely nationalistic urge has now been added the impetus of Hindu militarism, which has emerged as a political force since independence. I shall say something about this later. Indian statesmen make no secret of it today that if the

economic interests of the people call for industrialization, no less is this demanded by military necessities.

The Hindu dreams that he will eventually be able to hoist the West with its own petard, and he is not such a fool as many might imagine. In respect of industrialization there is a substantial difference between the situation which faced the Hindus before independence and that which exists today. Formerly they could hope to carry out the industrial revolution only through their own efforts and resources, as the Japanese had done. But now a new economic religion has arisen in the West, and it has its missionaries, compared with whom St Boniface and St Willibrord were but half-believers. Owing to it the Hindus are getting extensive help from the West to industrialize themselves, and they feel assured that they will be able to carry on their crusade against the West with its enthusiastic help and to the accompaniment of its hand-clapping.

The chauvinism has, however, a very curious counterpart in a spirit of servile imitation, a desire to copy the West in everything. To this attitude, too, the Hindu, with all Asiatics, are being driven by the West's economic snobbery, which may be described as the new racial arrogance. It has created an abject inferiority complex in all Asiatics, and industrialization has become a matter of self-respect for them. The Hindu ruling class even think that their country will have no international status unless it has an adverse trade balance, and they are doing everything in their power to make it as adverse as possible.

Even so I have not yet got to the root of the matter. Hindu nationalism is indeed a very powerful force behind the industrial revolution in India, but it is not *the most* powerful, and indeed cannot be because it is basically negative. A far stronger force, in actual fact the only positive force, is the Hindu's insatiable greed for money. King Dollar who is inciting King Paisa does not know either himself or his new 'Royal Brother'. The American industrialist, even when he is aware of no other motiva-

tion except acquisition of money, is the old European Conquistador in a new incarnation. He is the Genghiz Khan of the age of economics. But the Hindu money-maker can never be anything but his paisa-counting sordid self. He is the worshipper of money in the absolute manner. Believing that money can do everything, he is prepared to do everything for money. His spirit is best symbolized by the adulteration of food, medicine, and whatever else can be adulterated. There is no other country in the world in which this is practised so universally and openly, with a whole people and a Government powerless before it. It is this love of money which is the true motive power behind the industrialization of India, and all of us who are outside the movement know what is coming.

The connexion between money and industrialism is, however, so old that Milton placed it before the Fall. He wrote:

> *Mammon* led them on,
> *Mammon*, the least erected spirit that fell
> From heav'n, for ev'n in heav'n his looks and thoughts
> Were always downward bent, admiring more
> The riches of Heav'n's pavement, trod'n Gold,
> Then aught divine or holy else enjoy'd
> In vision beatific: by him first
> Men also, and by his suggestion taught,
> Ransack'd the Center, and with impious hands
> Rifl'd the bowels of their mother Earth
> For Treasures better hid.....

Though placed in a distant and imaginary past, the relationship as described by Milton is a very modern one, and it is certainly more obvious in the industrial enterprises of India today than in any other country.

I am not forgetting that there is an obvious objection to what I am saying. It will be pointed out that the men who are behind the industrial revolution in India do not

belong to the Bania or Hindu capitalist order—they come overwhelmingly from the moneyless and landless middle-class which professes to be Socialist. But this objection has very little substance, strong though it seems at the first blush. Socialism and the moneyless status are the least significant features of the industrializing programme. In India today there is no real conflict between the so-called Socialists and the so-called Capitalists.

I say this in spite of that much publicized and valuable quarrel—the battle of words that is going on between the Public Sector and the Private Sector. Almost all Indians know, though everyone would not proclaim it, that the Public Sector in India is the *very private* sector of the moneyless and landless middle-class, where it can earn as much money as it wants or has any conception of, without facing competition from that highly evolved and formidable money-maker, the Hindu Bania, and doing the only kind of work it has any capacity or inclination for, namely, a little scribbling on paper which in the higher ranks becomes only putting the sign manual.

The truth of the matter is that in regard to love of money there is only a difference of degree and not of kind between the Hindu Capitalists and the Hindu Socialists, and the degree is controlled by the reserve of vitality of each individual or class. One might say that the Bania is a dipsomaniac, but that does not mean that the politician, official, or manager cannot raise a thirst for cocktails. The intensity of the thirst is not indicated by the size of the drink.

Not less important for appraising the role of the money incentive in the Indian industrial revolution is a very peculiar relationship between the ruling and the Bania order. There exists an unwritten social contract between the two, without which the moneyless middle-class would not have been allowed to remain in the political saddle. The Hindu capitalists are indifferent to political power because they do not want to divert their energy from their proper function, which is money-making, to the

troubles and distractions of government. Even if they had not felt it themselves, the history of the East India Company would have taught them that to take up government is to abandon commerce. Moreover, they know that political power is not necessary to protect their interests, which are far better defended by their capacity to bribe the rulers. The almoner behind the counter can always buy up the beggar at the desk, and the Hindu Bania who is used to buying up the gods with charity, does not mind even forced charity to the rulers.

One might even go so far as to say that the traditional Hindu love of money has been liberated from its inhibitions by the new Secular State. In the past the Hindu's pursuit of money was restrained by the concept of Dharma, which is morality in the widest sense. The etymological meaning commonly given to the word is that it upholds the mundane order. So far as the Hindus were concerned certainly did. But the wretched pretence of secularism in people who cannot resist superstition in any form but are incapable of understanding both morality and religion, is removing the only check on the terrible Hindu passion for money. The Seth, that is, the old Hindu capitalist and merchant, was still very recently a great respecter of Dharma. He was, in his way, a minor angel in the Hindu heaven. But the Secular State is transforming him into something even more evil than Milton's fallen angel.

I must apologize for this long digression about the Indian industrial revolution, though it was necessary for the sake of giving an adequate idea of the danger to the aboriginals, and even for the general mass of the civilized population of India, that is implicit in the industrializing movement which is unfolding itself today. The point I wish to make is that all the forces behind it are subrational, and all in greater or lesser degree sinister. No chivalry, nor even a residue of compassion can be expected from such a retrograde phenomenon. For the primitives more especially, the worst is to be feared. It is not

simply that with the extension of industrialism the Hindus will only invade their territory, they will put an end to the relative degree of independence and isolation which they have so far enjoyed and by which they have been protected, and finally reduced them to economic and social slavery. The old Aryan did indeed degrade them on the plains, but he spared them in their wilds. The industrialized Hindu State will carry the servitude and degradation to the home territory of the aboriginals.

Even in this the new rulers of India will be true to the British heritage. It is one of the most significant things about them that in nothing that they do can they fail to act as the continuators of some British precedent. There is thus a British precedent for the degradation of the aboriginal. The British Kshatriya did indeed love and respect him, but not the British Vaisya or the trading class. One set of them, the tea-planters, recruited their labour from among the primitives of Chota Nagpur by methods which recalled those of the slave trader in Africa. In my boyhood I heard of, and sometimes also saw, the pathetic degradation and humiliation of these simple people in the tea-gardens of Assam. The British planters, if they did not employ press gangs, at least engaged the most unscrupulous native recruiting agents, who lured the aboriginals to the gardens by false promises, and there they were treated like plantation slaves. They were killed by malaria and Kala Azar, and if they returned at all they did so as physical and moral wrecks of their old selves. Their women, if attractive and young, drew the lust of the planters and their underlings, and were forced to lead the life of concubines or even common prostitutes. If their menfolk tried to protect them, they were shot. In my young days there was a notorious case of the murder of the husband of a young woman by a British planter, who was acquitted by a jury of British tradesmen in Calcutta. Such things were painful enough in isolated pockets, they would become hideous if they became general and wide-

spread in the aboriginal's own country. Yet it is impossible to dismiss the fear.

Of course, the more liberal Hindus think that the primitives will be able to protect themselves by using the political remedy which they are putting in the hands of these people. This is the vote. But I think that this democratic safeguard, instead of being able to counteract the evil against which it is intended, will by itself bring about a different kind of degradation. Strange as it will seem to those who do not know much about British Indian history, this too has a British precedent, set this time, not by the British Vaisya, but by the British Brahmin, the priest and the missionary. The missionaries who wanted to spread Christianity in India very soon found the Hindus too resistant, and they carried their activities to the aboriginals, who they thought would be more pliant. There is no doubt that they acted in good faith, thinking that Christianity would not only give them a new spiritual satisfaction, but also give them a social status which would be higher than what they had before *vis-a-vis* Hindu society. But the result proved to be very different in the social sphere. It was seen that, as soon as the aboriginal adopted Christianity, he became a different man. He lost his free spirit, and acquired the mental cast of a Hindu of the depressed classes. He began, on the one hand, to nurse grievances, on the other to depend more and more on his foreign Christian patron. He fell a prey to the inferiority complex, something which he had never done before with all the hostility of the Hindus arrayed against him.

The extension of democracy, accompanied as it will be by economic exploitation, will make this sense of grievance and sense of inferiority universal among the aboriginals. The more political power they get, the more will they use these to wage a class war, and a new human conflict will be added to those which are already rending the country. I should perhaps say that it has already begun.

Against this prospect, there seems at this moment to be only one hope for the aboriginals: that the industrial revolution as planned will fail. There is reason to think that if this revolution is left to the Hindus alone, this might happen. The Hindu order in its present state has neither the energy, physical and mental, nor the organizing capacity, nor perhaps the intelligence to carry through the type of industrialization which is now contemplated. Therefore I think, if the execution is left to them, the revolution as planned will fail, and quite a different kind of industrialization will come about. That will be less organized and more diffused, less collective and more individualistic, as indeed the Hindu mind and body are to be expected to make it. If that happens, the isolation and the way of life of the aboriginals will not be totally destroyed, and some of them at least will escape the ruin. Circe will fight for her children and she may even now win the battle.

But it is precisely in the failure of the Hindus that, to my mind, lies the greatest danger for the aboriginals. The powerful Western nations, more especially the United States, are becoming involved in the Indian industrial revolution financially, politically, strategically, and emotionally. They are expecting so much from it that its failure may be catastrophic for our political independence. In their disappointment the Western Powers might decide to take it up themselves and see it through.

Such a decision is to be feared more especially from the Americans. The clever Hindu who thinks that he can get everything he wants by playing off the Soviet Union against the United States may easily overplay his hand. The system of subsidiary alliances which the United States has already developed, and through which it has reduced all its allies to a status which is virtually that of vassals, should be a warning to all those who are having dealings with that country. Even now the paraphernalia of American philanthropy in India, consisting of the American Embassy, the technical and financial missions, and even

humanitarian ones, constitute in their impressive assemblage an American East India Company, presided over by Mr Governor Galbraith. Perhaps at this moment the Company is only thinking of carrying on its business through the King of Delhi, who *is* complaisant. But at times there are gestures which seem to hint at an expectation of the *Diwani*. (I would recommend to the Americans a close study of British Indian history from 1740 to 1780.)

The American Ambassador in India has something of the air of a Senatorial Proconsul, and the Special Representatives of the President of the United States pass through the country with the weight of a Legatus Augusti, all the time gathering an unseen purple around themselves. One hardly knows when the patience of these new Romans will be exhausted, and they will cry out, 'Time's up!'

I ask my American friends, 'If the worst comes to the worst, are you ready, in view of all your economic and emotional commitments, to write off India as you had to China?' One of them replied, 'If it were only a question of money, perhaps we could. But the emotional commitment is really the more serious part of the matter.' I liked the answer.

If on account of this involvement the United States were to feel that it must take over the Indian industrial revolution, it will be all over with the aboriginal. Under the protection of the Bald Eagle the native vulture will devour his body. With that, the history of the American people, too, will come full cycle. Nobody recalls that history today, nobody feels its paradoxical unfolding. This great nation was created by the most cruel and ruthless form of European colonialism, which in its final consummation was more destructive than that of Cortes or Pizarro, and yet with an appearance of incredible hypocrisy it claims to be the leader of the anti-colonial movement. But this empty talk will not change the course of its history. In the fulfilment of their destiny

the American people will become the greatest Imperial Power the world has seen, and they will repeat their history by having the blood of the Dark Indian on their head as they have that of the Red.*

Chapter 4

ON UNDERSTANDING THE HINDUS

THE Hindus are now the largest, and also the dominant element in the population of India. They are the masters and rulers. They have regained political power after many centuries, and are fully aware of it, perhaps over-aware. They are also the only source of energy for the country, considered as a human machine; and it is their desires and aspirations which are keeping it running. No other element counts. As the current jargon describes all the non-Hindus, they are only *minorities*.

The dominant and also dominating position of the Hindus is so patent that one should have thought that it would create interest in them both as individuals and as a collective personality. It has been said that character is fate. Now, if this is true of individuals, it seems to be no less true for nations. There certainly is such a thing as a national character, and once it has been formed it *does* control all the subsequent evolution of a people. At least, I have no hesitation in saying that if

* This chapter with its concluding paragraphs was written in January, 1962, and the latter are left just as they were. The Indo-Chinese conflict of October-November, 1962, demonstrated very forcefully the real status of the American Ambassador in India. Since then a situation has been developing in which there are clear signs that India is well on the way to becoming an Anglo-American protectorate. Of course, Hindu India is still jibbing. However, the Hindu proposes, but the Pentagon disposes.

the history of India has taken a certain course in the last fifty years, or for that matter in the last thousand, that is due, above all, to the Hindu character. It has been the most decisive determining influence on the historical process. I feel equally certain that it will remain so and shape the form of everything that is being undertaken for and in the country.

But I hardly notice the interest which the Hindu character deserves, though I see a good deal in reinforced concrete. The contemporary craze for information about material and external things is not associated in India today with even a balancing interest in the mind and behaviour of the Hindus, though they are a very specialized type of human being, who cannot be managed at all by imputing Western mental traits to them.

At the most, one finds an American, British, or European scholar trying to interpret them in the light of a prefabricated psychology. But Freudian or Freudistic interpretations of the Hindu mind are no better guides to it than any other indoctrinated approach, for example the Marxist. All these are intellectual games with the Hindus as chessmen, and very interesting they are as games. But the living Hindu belongs to his own world, which is not less bizarre than the Freudian, nor is it less dogmatic and fanatical than the Marxist.

Much more puzzling than the contemporary indifference in respect of the Hindu mind is a past failure. Incredible as it might sound, the British, though they ruled India for two hundred years and at first with great success, never succeeded even in discovering the Hindu mind, not to speak of getting to grips with it. This failure stands in astounding contrast with their knowledge in the non-human sphere, and even in the human when it was a question of a kind of fauna only, and not of a fellow-mind. Since I have spoken with undisguised admiration of that knowledge I think I have earned the right to criticize the failure. The British intelligence stopped short at treating human beings in India as ani-

mals, and splintered on the mind. It burst above Hindu behaviour like shrapnel on entrenched positions, only irritating the defenders, but giving no help to the attacking side.

No one pointed this out more forcefully than a Bengali, and he did so when the British were at the height of their power and prestige in India. He was Bankim Chandra Chatterji, who besides being a genius in imaginative literature, was certainly the most powerful intellect produced by India in the nineteenth century, and one of the greatest of Hindu minds, perhaps equalled in the past—whole of the Hindu past—only by the great Samkara. In one of his books, published in the eighties of the last century, he made a character—whom he represented as a teacher—say that 'the English had a limited intelligence and their knowledge was irritating'. The student in the dialogue at once remarked, showing the Bengali's awe of the English mind in those days, that in an insignificant and petty Bengali this was very cheeky. The teacher stuck to his point and amplified it. I give a translation of the passage:

Yes, even as an insignificant Bengali I will say that the English intellect is narrow. A nation which has been ruling India for one hundred and twenty years and has not understood one thing about its inhabitants, may have many other qualities—I am willing to admit that—but it cannot be credited with a comprehensive intelligence.

Then Chatterji summed up the Englishman's knowledge of India in a vivid and most illuminating simile. He compared it to a large and fine orchard, full of fruit which was neither eaten nor enjoyed by its owner. I do not think that the purely external character of the British knowledge of India could be illustrated more effectively.

This failure, so inexplicable at first sight, is, however, very easily accounted for. As soon as the English mind came in contact with the Hindu's, which was a very

different kind of mind, it completely lost its temper, and so became incapable of dispassionate analysis. But the display of temper was at least spectacular, like fireworks. The pen of the administrators, teachers, missionaries, in fact, of all Englishmen who had to deal at first hand with the Hindus, spluttered pejoratives in the manner of crackers.

Never did this exhibition of contempt and anger cease so long as British rule remained a live thing in India. 'Degraded, perverse, grotesque, contradictory'—were some of the milder adjectives used. The 'effeminate Hindu' was a stock phrase. The Hindus were regarded as untruthful, dishonest, and shifty, and often described as such to their face. So far from softening in their actual company, the Englishman only felt more provoked by it to speak out his mind. Even after inviting a modern Hindu to a meal he would make the shortcomings of his character the staple of his table-talk. The toast to the guest lost nothing in raciness.

Again, no one noted this more clearly than Bankim Chandra Chatterji, who drew a very unexpected moral from it. In a remarkable article in Bengali, entitled 'Racial Animosity' and published in 1873, he wrote:

If we take up any English newspaper (that is, a newspaper edited by Englishmen) in India we are sure to find somewhere in it some abuse of the Natives, some unfair vilification. Again, looking into any Bengali newspaper, we find as a matter of equal certainty anger against the English and denunciation of them. In every Indian newspaper there is unjust criticism of the English, in every English newspaper the same injustice to Indians. This has been going on for a long time, there is nothing novel about it. Conversation in society runs along the same lines.

Chatterji then went on to say that good people on both sides regretted this, and were trying to put an end to it so far as they could, but with no success whatever.

Then followed his own comment, which was extremely original. He on his part regretted the failure to consider whether Indians had anything to gain at all by having the racial enmity done with, and whether it was at all removable. He observed that the hatred was the product of the historical situation. Then he concluded:

So long as the conqueror-conquered relationship will last between the English and Indians, and so long as even in our present degraded condition we shall remember our former national glory, there cannot be any hope of lessening the racial hatred. And I sincerely pray that so long as we do not become the equals of the English, may this impact of racial animosity remain as strong on us as it is now! After all, racial hatred and emulation run side by side, and it is to the existence of the hatred that we owe our efforts to rival the English up to a point. We shall not make the effort to the same extent if we are pampered by them, as we are now doing under insult and ridicule, because there will not be the same smart all over the body. Competition can exist only with opponents, and not with colleagues. A progressive enemy stimulates progress, a progressive friend is an encourager of indolence.

As a contemporary judgement on the mutual misunderstanding this passage is remarkable, and all the more so because we now have an opportunity to compare it with the effect of Western praise—the new flattery. No sensible Indian will have a moment's hesitation in saying which is preferable. One day I shall write a whole book to describe what we in Bengal did by way of replying to the British contumely. Here I shall only say, and I say it as one of the very last of the Babus who picked up the gauntlet thrown down by the English, that if I write the kind of English I write, it is due partly at least to the ridicule of our English by the local British, high and low.

But I must also be fair. It was not the Englishman alone who felt the irritation, the Muslim felt it equally if not even more. From the very beginning of their relations with the Hindus, even those Muslims who wanted to understand them had to start with unpleasant impressions. Alberuni, to whom I have referred and who lived in the court of Sultan Mahmud of Ghazni, has written one of the most valuable accounts of the customs and beliefs of the Hindus as they were on the eve of the Muslim conquest. His account is completely objective, but even he could not suppress his annoyance, and had some hard things to set down about the Hindu character at the beginning of his account.

He observed that the character of the Hindus made it 'particularly difficult to penetrate into the essential nature of any Indian subject'. Its peculiarities, he added, were serious obstacles in the way of knowledge, and they were deeply rooted and manifest to all. He was conscious, and he said in so many words that to speak in this way might sound like satire. But he found that there was no escape from the Hindu character. He reconciled himself to it as if with a shrug of the shoulders, commenting, 'We can only say that folly is an illness against which there is no medicine.' Yet he did not allow this annoyance to interfere with the accuracy and truth of his account. How I wish that the American professors who are so busy with us had some of this realism and insight combined. They would be both more patriotic and more philanthropic if they had. But I hear enough among even Americans and also all other foreigners to convince me that they find many traits in the Hindu character very trying, and I do not understand why they do not make a clean breast of it, except once in a while in a blundering book which never gets anywhere near the Hindu reality and is all the more peevish for being made into a forbidden safety-valve.

As against the angry thesis of all Occidentals who had first-hand experience of the Hindus, two counter-

theses were put forward by other Europeans, but for the most part on the strength of hearsay, or only academic study. The first of these came from the European Orientalists, who pieced together a picture of India from Sanskrit and other texts, and tried to represent the Hindu order as a coherent system, with a logic of its own. But from the first this interpretation remained a purely literary creation, a self-sufficient presentation with its exclusive data, axioms, postulates, theorems, and corollaries, a sort of Euclidean geometry of India, an abstraction in the literary dimension, with no necessary relation to anything that existed in fact, though I cannot say that it did not at times touch hard ground. By way of illustration I might refer to the picture of a 'Buddhist India' which we had to read in our young days, but which was only a piecing together of information found in Pali and other Buddhist texts. In actual fact, no exclusive 'Buddhist India' existed at any time in the history of the country.

This interpretation has now become the discipline called Indology in Western universities, and there are imitations of it in Indian universities also. The science has certainly developed since it was profounded, and it is becoming more accurate and full through continued research, which is largely a better exploitation of the texts. But it still remains the literary creation it was, perfectly valid and even formidable on its own assumption and in its own world, but of no practical significance except when it falls in with a set of current myths about India. Then its conclusions are trotted out as scientific confirmation of political lies, but even then it is always put to use in a misunderstood and even deliberately falsified version.

The other interpretation came from the idealists of Europe, who sought the fulfilment of their moral and spiritual aspirations in the far-off, away from a reality where they were always meeting with disappointment. They wanted something illusion-proof, and since Hindu

metaphysics knew neither original sin nor evil as an ever-present challenge to moral notions it was easy, to find in it a refuge for the spiritual and moral romanticism of nineteenth-century Europe. This line of inquiry was also the continuation of a very much older European myth, summed up in the tag—*Ex Oriente lux*. It was the cult of Mithras or Isis in a revised version, and it invested not only Hinduism, but also Rabindranath Tagore, poor man, with a mysticism which neither of the two possessed! The Hindu spirituality of which the West spoke was the creation of a Western spiritual necessity, and was not to be found in India either in books or among men. But at the beginning the search was at least sincere. Now it has degenerated almost into charlatanry, and the Orontes is washing itself into the Tiber. There are few characters which are more painfully unattractive than the Hinduizing Occidental. The Hindus have detected this weakness, and have not been slow in setting their mountebanks on the West. It enables a number of my countrymen to make a comfortable livelihood; still I do not like the imposition.

Besides these two older and established versions of India, there is a third one which is now making its appearance. Like the first, it is a product of academic research and, in harmony with the spirit of the age, it is economic in its scope. It is an extension of the old historical inquiry from the cultural to the economic field. The general tendency of this line of research is to rehabilitate the peoples of Asia who had been reduced to political subjection by the expansion of Europe, in the economic sphere. This retrospective attempt at justice, which cannot, of course, undo what history has actually accomplished, aims at showing that, compared with the Western nations, the contemporaneous Asiatics were not less developed economically. So far as knowledge is information, these new investigations are likely to be useful, for they will bring to light a whole body of new facts which are so far unknown. But one must be very

careful in their interpretation and in drawing any wider conclusions as to the relative development of the Asiatic and European peoples. It must not be forgotten that history has already pronounced its judgement and no retrospective interpretation can be valid which will even imply that what actually happened was an absurdity, or an injustice, or merely a *luscus naturae*. There is such a thing as foreclosure in history as in law.

The point which has to be specially kept in mind in reassessing the economic development of the nations of Asia before the Europeans brought them under their own domination is that similarities in institutions and even in the realized achievements at a particular epoch is no indication whatever of future potentialities, or even of the actual quality of the life lived. The basic difference between the peoples of Asia and of Europe in the eighteenth century was this: one was at that point of exhaustion at which the sterility of a people begins, while the other was growing and dynamic. In short, it was a difference in their respective vitality. That made, and will always make, a world of difference.

Since the new line of research is sure to continue and develop, two other reservations must be made about it. First, historical research, however objective in its methods, is always conditioned in its interpretations and practical implications by political changes, and the new economic history of Asia is bound to reflect the mood created by the ebb-tide of European imperialism and also by the policy of economic aid to the Asiatic peoples which has been accepted by nearly all Western countries. Secondly, this new scholarly creation is also likely to be an academic one, like the creation of the old Orientalists.

I have also to take note of a popular revision of attitude. This is also a by-product of the passing away of the European empires, and is inspired by a sort of meaculpism. It regards the uniformly contemptuous views on Asiatics and more especially on the Hindus on the part of Europeans as an expression of racial and political

arrogance; and as the product of pride as well as of prejudice. This simply will not hold water. For, if there was any original bias in Europe in regard to India in the eighteenth century, it was a favourable bias. The country was regarded as a land of fabulous wealth and splendour, and of barbaric pearl and gold. In the moral and spiritual sphere, it was supposed to be the home of esoteric wisdom. But this Indolatry broke down as soon as the European came into direct contact with the country and its people. The higher the horse, the greater the fall, and the Occidental soon passed from sentimental admiration to disillusioned abuse.

Gradually, the British in India built up a comprehensive local tradition in respect of Indians, which was a sort of common law of disparagement based on *ad hoc* judgements. Throughout the nineteenth century it grew by broadening from precedent to precedent, without providing any redress in equity. Every newcomer from Britain was quickly initiated into it, and lost his sense of fairness with an ease which, to say the least, was remarkable. We Indians noticed the transformation, and it was a subject of frequent comment among us. In my young days, if a teacher or missionary was even passably nice, the students at once recognized a newcomer in him (of course helped by the state of his complexion too), and they observed ruefully that he would not be recognizable in a year's time. We always attributed this change to the evil influence of the hard-boiled Anglo-Indian (old sense), and never even imagined that the man's personal experience might have something to do with it.

I think Mr E. M. Forster can be cited as a witness on this question: whether or not first-hand experience was the really decisive factor in bringing about a change of opinion in the Englishman in regard to Indians. In the eyes of the British and Indians alike Mr Forster is *the* pro-Indian Englishman. He was adored by the Indian toadies who in the olden days longed for English companionship, male and female, and is even now very high-

ly regarded by the ex-toadies who bask in the sunshine of British company in the big cities of India, especially New Delhi. But his novel, *A Passage to India,* presents all the Indians in it either as perverted, clownish, or queer characters. There are few delineations of the Indian character which are more insultingly condescending to self-respecting Indians, Muslim and Hindu, than those of this book. The Muslim who was a Member of the Viceroy's Executive Council at the time the book was published was furious over it. And I, suspecting from the reviews that it would be painful to go through while British rule lasted in India, did not read it till 1954. Then all my fears were confirmed.

But the important thing is that Mr Forster was not influenced by the local tradition. He was not *persona grata* with the British ruling class in India, and he reciprocated the unfriendliness. If he was badly treated by some of them he did not treat them less unkindly. Yet, when it came to drawing Indian characters, he was as satirical and uncomplimentary as the worst of the others could be. Mr Forster makes no secret that he did not feel drawn towards the Hindus, and that he preferred the Muslims.

So, the revision of history as well as the revision of policy leaves the old unfavourable judgement untouched. It stands as a challenge to everyone who would offer an alternative interpretation of the Asiatic and more especially the Hindu character. The angry reaction was universal, and there was no European who came to India who did not leave the country with a poorer opinion of its inhabitants than he had come with, and many recorded it. This massive, spontaneous, and uniform criticism by live minds which were formed by a culture at the height of its power cannot be cancelled by afterthoughts which have their source in the *Untergang des Abenlandes.*

I accept the empiric albeit slapdash, judgements as sincere, as opinions founded on actual experience of

something or other though not as final assessments, and I believe they should be the starting-point for any intellectual appraisement. No new interpreter will reach dependable conclusions about the Hindus by treating these old judgements as dishonest. It is only by admitting their bona fides that one can get past the denigration.

My criticism of the former Western attitude is this: that it did not go forward from anger to understanding; and my criticism of the Hindu revisionists is also on the same lines—that they get angry without understanding the Western reaction. I do not get angry any more, though I used to, and I think, by accepting the Western anger as genuine, I have put the interpretations of Hindu life that I am going to offer on a sound footing.

Intellectually, the European mind was outraged by the Hindus precisely in those three principles which were fundamental to its approach to life, and which it had been applying with ever greater strictness since the Renaissance: that of reason, that of order, and that of measure. Those who were calling even the beautiful mediaeval civilization Gothic barbarism in the light of the new European values were not likely in any circumstances to be complimentary or even understanding with the Hindus. To these men everything about these people appeared to be irrational, inconsistent, unholy, and extravagant, also lush, awry, and hypertrophied beyond conception.

The contradictions were formidable. There was an extreme of renunciation with its opposite in an avarice of whose sordidness no European could form any idea. There was an unnatural insistence, partly realized in practice, on chastity, accompanied by a sex-obsession and sensuality in personal life whose scale and degradation had to be seen to be believed. To give another example, there was a morbid respect for animal life, going hand in hand with beastly cruelty to living crea-

tures subject to human exploitation. Well, one could go on listing such things indefinitely.

The irrationality was equally perplexing. In political thought the so-called Kautilya, now called Kautalya, in his *Arthasastra* gives expression to the frankest conceivable *raison d'état*. The book should be a *vade mecum* for all who want to run a secular and police state, but its last chapter seriously lists the methods and drugs by using which spies can become invisible! The Manu Smriti, the famous 'Laws of Manu', the most authoritative of the treatises on Hindu sacred law, is as a whole a very noble exposition of the Brahmanic way of life, but its final chapter describes seriously what kind of rebirth is punishment for which sin. It actually says that if a man steals silk he becomes a partridge, but by stealing dyed cloth he becomes not any kind of partridge but only a francolin partridge (black partridge). Some other threatened metempsychoses are—for stealing cotton-cloth a man becomes a crane, but by stealing linen he becomes a frog. Please read the whole chapter in an English translation, e.g., Buehler's.

All this was noticed by Alberuni, and it did not make him more respectful of the Hindu mind. Comparing the Hindus with the Greeks, he said that the former had no one to bring the sciences to a classical perfection. Therefore, he went on to say, the scientific theories of the Hindus were in a state of utter confusion, devoid of order, and in the last resort always mixed up with the silly notions of the crowd. Alberuni compared their mathematics and astronomy to a mixture of pearls and sour dates or dung, and observed that both kinds of things were equal in their eyes because they could not raise themselves to the methods of a strictly scientific deduction.

I myself have all my life seen professors of physics loaded with amulets, secularists poring over horoscopes and palms, and politicians refraining from submitting their election nominations except on auspicious days.

As I am writing these lines, preparations are going on in the park before my house for a great *Yajna* or Brahmanic sacrifice to avert the destruction of the world at the beginning of February, the year being 1962. This has been predicted by the astrologers and is to be brought about by a conjunction of eight planets. I am sure that, simultaneously, the secular Hindus of New Delhi (who are not above coming to these sacrifices) are whispering into American ears that Hinduism is dying of Americanism, and getting promises of more money to hasten the process.

The Western sense of measure, if anything, was even more outraged. Neither time nor space had any limits for the Hindus. Alberuni noted this as well. Thousands and even millions were nothing to them, and if they only could they would have put ∞ after every mention of space, and *n*th after every enumeration of magnitude. Even now the Hindus get angry if the usual historical chronology in terms of Christ's birth is applied to their existence. They say that it is too petty a scale to apply to anything Hindu: their duration must be measured in aeons. In the same way the number of their gods became swollen from some thirty-three of the earliest times to three hundred and thirty million in later times. It is inherent in the Nature of Things in India that such magnifications should take place. To the Hindu world might be applied the words of the old Dutch navigator quoted by Poe: 'Surely, there is a sea where the ship itself will grow in bulk like the living body of the seaman.' Varying the simile one might say that the Hindu mind is so convex that it is in itself a microscope.

In the moral sphere, the Europeans were shocked by contradictions, which seemed wholly unnatural to them, which they could not reconcile with any principle of morality familiar to them. These contradictions were particularly resented by the Western mind when the Hindus mixed up sexual experiences with the spiritual.

They attributed such things to a devilish hypocrisy or utter degradation, and I must say that I have myself been shocked by their capacity for sophistry. When I was young a neo-Hindu Sadhu came to preach in my town. He spoke of Krishna, and referring to the accusation brought forward by the Christian missionaries that he was licentious, the champion of Hinduism said something in Hindi whose equivalent I give in English: 'That showed that Krishna was a mighty hero. If you had to carry on with sixteen hundred lusty young women like Krishna, in one night your face would look like a baked apple.' The roar of laughter and the approving murmur that followed showed that the Hindu crowd was satisfied that the blasphemous missionaries had been answered in the way they deserved.

The Hindus, on their part, cannot understand the European impatience and criticism. They get angry and attribute them to racial arrogance. Now, I accept the Hindu position as I do the European, and therefore I can make allowance for both. But if I am able to do so, that detachment has been arrived at by taking great pains to understand both the attitudes, and to discover their springs.

The point which must be thoroughly grasped before anyone can attempt to deal with Hindu behaviour is that in one's contacts with it one is in very much deeper waters than is generally suspected. Having obtained a sounding of the depths I am no longer offended by the contempt which European rationalism airs towards us, nor am I taken in by the tricks of the expositors of Hindu spirituality. Thus, in offering my interpretation of the Hindus, I have no need to be in awe of either of the attitudes, and, least of all, of the European disapproval. For angry and vociferous but honest defence of the Hindu behaviour my readers should go to the traditional Hindu, and for sheepish, mumbled, and dishonest apologies to the Anglicized Hindu. I belong to neither school.

Chapter 5

JANUS AND HIS TWO FACES

IN all the essays that I have planned to write on Indian life the Hindus will necessarily figure as the main character, and in one or two even as the only one. This saves me the labour of setting forth a complete analysis of their group personality in one place, and permits me to spread out the examination by considering, as I deal with each aspect of Hindu life, the traits relevant to that.

In this chapter I shall only indicate what I regard as its basic feature, a peculiarity of the Hindu mind which controls all the facets of its total expression. This is a terrible dichotomy. Every Hindu is divided against himself, and it would seem throughout his historical existence he has been. The human personality is indeed contradictory everywhere, but normally one set of traits can push their opposites into the background and become dominant. But with the Hindus the opposites almost neutralize one another, and the indecisive tug-of-war stultifies all their actions.

It is on account of the presence of such opposites that I have taken the Roman god Janus as the symbol of the Hindu character. But it does not present only two faces. It has a whole series of them, going in pairs. For this reason the Hindu personality might be called not even Janus Quadrifrons, but Janus Multifrons.

Among the large number of antithetical though connected traits which shape Hindu behaviour, I shall mention here, by way of example, only those which are influencing their politics, both domestic and foreign. These are the following: A sense of Hindu solidarity with an uncontrollable tendency towards disunity within the Hindu order; collective megalomania with self-abasement; extreme xenophobia with an abject xenolatry; authoritarianism with anarchic individualism; violence with non-

violence; militarism with pacifism; possessiveness with carelessness about property owned; courage with cowardice; cleverness with stupidity.

I shall have to examine these contradictions when discussing Hindu national and international politics. Here, just to induce belief in the thesis of the dichotomy, I shall describe that contradiction which is least suspected and which gives a particular appositeness to the symbol of Janus. The current belief is that the Hindus are a peace-loving and non-violent people, and this belief has been fortified by Gandhism. In reality, however, few human communities have been more warlike and fond of bloodshed. I know this will not be believed, for Hindu militarism lies buried under a mound of mythical notions about their *ahimsa,* non-violence, as the Assyrian kingdom lay under mounds of sand until Layard began to unearth it. I cannot expose the whole of it, but I shall at least dig a few trenches to reveal the existence of a new Assyria.

About twenty-five words in an inscription of Asoka have succeeded in almost wholly suppressing the thousands in the rest of the epigraphy and the whole of Sanskrit literature which bear testimony to the incorrigible militarism of the Hindus. Their political history is made up of blood-stained pages. Asoka himself said that in order to conquer Kalinga, that is, to make a small addition to the conquests of his father and grandfather, he had to wage a war in the course of which fifty thousand people had to be deported, one hundred thousand were killed, and many times this number perished in other ways. Though Maurya imperialism was certainly imitative of the Achaemenian, the kings of the dynasty did not imitate the humanity of Cyrus. Their methods of war were Assyrian, and recall in the killings and deportations the ferocity of an Ashur-nasir-pal.

Asoka added, seemingly without even any unconscious irony, that after the annexation of the region his mind turned to Dharma. He could let it do so, for there was

nothing left to conquer in Aryan India. There was also no other way open to him to expiate for the bloodshed except by reducing the number of animals slaughtered for the royal kitchen. From many thousands they were brought down to three—two peacocks and one gazelle, and it was promised even this would be stopped. It seems possible that the practice in the Hindu Bania or commercial order of atoning for their methods of earning money by feeding ants and preserving bed-bugs was derived from this exalted precedent.

Between this unnecessary proclamation of non-violence in the third century B.C. and its reassertion, largely futile, in the twentieth century by Mahatma Gandhi, there is not *one word* of non-violence in the theory and practice of statecraft by the Hindus. Read all the inscriptions, and you will find that when they are not bare records of gifts or genealogy, they are proclamations of the victories and the conquests of the kings concerned.

The martial boasting is found not only among the Hindu kings, but equally among the Buddhist: Harsha, Dharmapala, or Devapala, who were no less warlike than the Guptas. *Mudgagiri-samavasita-jayaskandhavarat*—from the camp of victory pitched at Monghyr, Dharmapala announced that his cavalry was raising the dust to the skies.

The whole of Sanskrit literature, from the epics down to the latest long poems, is full of accounts of battles and exultation over war and conquest. These were the business of Hindu kings. They were always praised for having *exterminated* all their enemies, and one uniform formula of glorification for them is that they raised universal lamentation among the wives of the enemy folks. All over Aryavarta there was a voice heard, wives weeping for their husbands and would not be comforted, because they were not. Even the Aryan parrot to whom I have referred, greets King Sudraka in the following *Arya*, which is a special kind of couplet:

Stana-yugam asru-snatam,
samipataravarti hridaya-sokagne,—
Charati vimukta-haram
vratam'iva bhavato ripu-strinam.

The pair of breasts, bathed both in tears,
They sit beside the fire of grief blazing in the heart;
Bare of necklace, in the penance
As it were, of your widow'd enemy-wives.

One of the most excruciating themes in Sanskrit poetry is the visit of the women to the battlefields. It was after reading the canto in the Mahabharata dealing with such a visit that I first got the sense of the hollowness of the victory of the Pandavas over the Kurus. I am also quite sure that it was with a knowledge of this canto, as well as of the ghastly realities of actual wars in ancient India that the author of the Gita put the famous anticipatory lamentation in the mouth of Arjuna: 'I do not wish for victory, Krishna! Nor do I desire kingdom and joys. What will empire and enjoyments avail if I have to kill those very persons for whose sake I want these. Teachers, parents, sons, grandparents, uncles, relations by marriage, and all kinsfolk will have to be killed, and I will not kill them even for the possession of the whole world.'

This picture is quite unrelieved in the entire range of descriptions in Sanskrit literature. The young princes of the defeated dynasties who survived were carried away as prisoners, and every morning they had to sing the praise of the victorious king as he entered the audience-hall. On account of this the Sanskrit word for a war prisoner, *Bandi*, came to mean almost exclusively the court choir of praise. The married women, especially the queens, mounted the pyre, and even Harsha's sister attempted this. Young princesses ran away into the forests, where they were often seized by the hunters. Otherwise, they also were carried away by the victorious king to be employed as handmaidens. Occasionally, a very kind queen would take pity on them and treat them with affection.

Even so, they would not be married to princes of the blood. Here is a typical example of the kind treatment. The chamberlain comes to the Crown Prince, kneels down, and placing his right hand on the floor gives him a message from his mother. He says:

Prince! Domina magna Vilasavati, your mother, commands—

'When some time ago His Majesty took the capital of the Kulutas, he brought away this maiden named Patralekha, the daughter of their king, with the prisoners, and because she was a child he put her among the handmaidens of the inner palace. I developed an affection for her as an orphaned princess, and took care of her for some years and brought her up as if she were my own daughter. Now that she is of an appropriate age and altogether charming, I am sending her to you as your handmaiden, to carry your betel tray. But you must not look upon her as an ordinary servant. You will take care of her as a child, restrain any wild impulses in her as you do those of your own heart, treat her as your pupil, and make her share all your recreations as a friend . . . ,' [and so on. The Prince replies:] 'It will be as my mother commands.*

But the realistic Hindu practice of war had its idealistic theory, which was developed very early. Frightened by the militaristic violence and the proneness to bloodshed of their people, the ancient Hindu moralists tried to restrain and purify it by formulating a moral concept of war as a war of righteousness, or, as they called it, *Dharma Yuddha*. This theory, though religious in its complexion, was something like the chivalry of the middle ages. It was proclaimed as the duty of the warrior, the Kshatriya, that he should defend and succour the distressed. 'The terrifying name of Kshatriya is famed throughout the world because he saves men from peril and injury', so wrote Kalidasa, the greatest poet of ancient India.

* There is no *oratio obliqua* in Sanskrit. All reported speeches are in the *oratio recta*.

The war of the Mahabharata is, of course, the full-length illustration of a righteous war. When the last round of the fighting was over, with the Kuru King Duryodhana lying fatally wounded on the battlefield, Bhima went up and kicked him, and Bhima's friends shouted in triumph and abused the vanquished. At once Krishna, who had helped them to win by his wise counsel, gave them a reproof:

Kings and princes! [he said] it is not proper to use harsh language towards an enemy who is virtually dead. I considered the shameless and evil-minded Duryodhana as already dead when he refused to give to his cousins their rightful share of the ancestral dominions. But that base man is now in a state in which he cannot be regarded either as a friend or as an enemy, he is like an inert log. So you should not abuse him. Let us leave this place in our chariots.

This was the spirit in which a war was to be fought: the evil-doer and the unrighteous had to be punished, but there was to be no gloating on his end.

This spirit was invoked in the Hindu uprisings against the Muslims, and it was invoked both consciously and successfully. Most Hindu rebels, among whom I would also include the Sikhs, claimed with justice that they were fighting for Dharma, their way of life which was righteous. This gave a new form to the old Hindu love of war, and brought about what might be called a renaissance of Hindu militarism. It even created some of the most famous fighting communities of modern India out of elements in the population which had never been martial in the past. These were the Marathas, the Jats around Mathura, and the Sikhs. Let me give the example of the Jats whose record is the least known.

In 1757 the Afghan king Ahmad Shah Abdali advanced on Mathura and gave the order: 'The city of Mathura is the holy place of the Hindus, let it be put to the sword, up to Agra leave not a single place standing.' Even

though aware of the power of the Afghans the peasants of Brij under their peasant prince Jawahir Singh stood in the way. Eight miles from Mathura, at Chaumuha, ten thousand Jats fought for nine hours until they were broken. The Muslim historians recorded that ten to twelve thousand men lay dead on both sides, and the wounded were beyond count. When the next morning the Afghans entered Mathura there was wholesale massacre and rape for hours together. A Muslim eye-witness wrote: 'Everywhere in the lanes and bazaars lay the headless trunks of the slain, the whole city was in flames, and the water of the Jumna was reddish with blood.'

That planted an undying hatred of the Muslim in the Jat heart, which bided its time under British rule and broke out with the first opportunity in 1947. When my sons visited the Jat country and the town of Dig, the old Jat capital, some years later they were surprised to see rows and rows of houses in ruins and without an inhabitant. These were the homes of the one-time Muslim population of the town. The Jat guide explained with a smile, 'We finished them off, all of them.' I might explain that the new massacres which began in June, 1947, after the announcement of the plan of partition had their focal point at Bharatpur, the Jat capital.

By the middle of the eighteenth century the militarism of the Marathas had degenerated, and their campaigns were inspired by the old desire of conquest and vainglory. It became even predatory. But when this type of militarism met with the punishment it deserved, its passing away was ennobled by a reversion to Dharma in the last charge at the third battle of Panipat in 1761. After being roundly defeated by Ahmad Shah Abdali in the game of conquest and plunder, and finding that the only choices before them were honourable death in battle, or ignoble death from starvation or surrender, the Maratha nobility fell back on Dharma. At dawn they bathed and worshipped, and as the sun rose thirteen thousand horsemen raised their great Bhagwa Jhanda, the saffron-coloured standard

of Sivaji, and charged to thunderous shouts of 'Hara, Hara, Mahadeo'. Before that onslaught the Afghans wavered and even broke, but the Abdali's counter-attack wiped out the Marathas. Locked in a hand-to-hand fight, in which dust hid the battlefield and blood fell in showers, the Maratha nobility perished almost to the last man. A Muslim observer recorded that after the battle the ground looked like a mowed-down field of tulips.

When, in the next phase, the struggle of the Hindus to maintain their political independence had to be carried on against the British, they still fought in the name of Dharma. The last bid for victory by Hindu militarism, which was made by the sepoys of the East India Company, was also incited by a blind and fanatical regard for Dharma, and it was mainly an uprising of the two highest Hindu castes of the Gangetic plain, the Brahmins and the Kshatriyas. After the suppression of the Mutiny with a ruthlessness which appeared to be that of the Christian Ironsides, but was really of the heathen berserker, all openings for Hindu militarism disappeared from the arena of action.

But such an old and deep-seated passion was bound to show itself to be ineradicable, and therefore it was also bound to assume a new form—a vicarious one. It showed itself as an emotional and intellectual interest in war among the Hindu reformers of the nineteenth century. Thus the so-called Indian renaissance had also a militaristic aspect. If the Bengali novel which came into being then had love in the European sense as its theme, it also had war as an accompaniment, which, too, was European. Seven out of the fourteen novels of Bankim Chandra Chatterji, who is the first true Bengali novelist and still remains the greatest, depend for the unfolding of their plots on fighting.

Apart from this emotional satisfaction there was also some intellectual effort to understand the science and art of war. In Chatterji's novels are to be found allusions to Austerlitz and Salamanca. All this made Bengalis

born during the last quarter of the nineteenth century dabble in military history and follow the contemporaneous wars with keen interest. Thus it was that even before I was ten I had learnt from my father about all the wars of modern times from the Franco-Prussian War to the Boer War. Before I was sixteen I had studied the campaigns of Napoleon and of the Russo-Japanese war myself in some detail.

This vicarious militarism gave a strong military colour to the first outburst of the nationalist movement in Bengal in 1905, and the Bengali revolutionary movement in its ideological inspiration was wholly military. It was at first conceived of as an incipient military uprising. But it soon degenerated into a terroristic movement of political murder, which was due to two reasons: first, the impossibility of organizing a military revolt in the existing conditions, and, secondly, the existence of a tradition of private murder for revenge among the Bengali gentry, which necessarily influenced the revolutionary activity.

None the less, the military concept remained dormant, and asserted itself from time to time. In none was this more clearly seen than in the Bengali political leader, Subhas Chandra Bose, who was also a figure in the terroristic movement. I have in my possession the pre-war manual of infantry training of the British army which belonged to Bose and is even annotated by him. The first expression of Bose's militarism was seen at the session of the Indian National Congress in Calcutta in 1928. For it Bose organized a volunteer corps in uniform, its officers being even provided, so far as I remember, with steel-chain epaulettes. Bose designated himself as its General-Officer-Commanding, G.O.C. for short, and his uniform was made by a firm of British tailors in Calcutta, Harman's. A telegram addressed to him as G.O.C. was delivered to the British general in Fort William, and this was the subject of a good deal of malicious comment in the Anglo-Indian Press. Mahatma Gandhi, being a sincere pacifist vowed to non-violence, did not like the

strutting, clicking of boots, and saluting, and he afterwards described the Calcutta session of the Congress as a Bertram Mills circus, which caused great indignation among the Bengalis.

But Bose gave a serious expression to his militarism afterwards, though he began only with play-acting. During the second World War he organized his Indian National Army in Malaya with the help of the Japanese, and some thousands of Indian soldiers drawn from the prisoners of war in Japanese hands, though not a majority of them, furnished the bulk of his troops. His mind must have been working in secret on such a scheme after the military disasters for Britain and France in 1940. About that time I one day told a friend how Masaryk had organized an army of liberation out of the Czech soldiers of the old Austrian army who were prisoners in Russia. He repeated the story to Bose, and told me afterwards that upon hearing it Bose had only remarked: 'Where is the man in India to do such a thing?' But my friend added that he had also noticed a strange fire in Bose's eyes.

It is common knowledge that Bose's army roused immense, and almost hysterical enthusiasm among Indians in the last months of the war and those immediately following. The Indian public was determined that Bose's men, who had been taken prisoner by the British Indian army, should not be punished as traitors by the authorities under military law, which they had undoubtedly violated, and the Indian public made the British authorities eat the humble pie. Such trials as were held were turned into a farce and a fiasco. Such was the strength of the popular feeling that in order to keep the hold of the Gandhian Congress unimpaired, even Gandhi and Nehru came out vehemently on the side of the men of Bose's army. Gandhi was a pacifist vowed to non-violence, Nehru was an anti-Fascist, and both had forced Bose out of the Congress in 1939. But the dead Bose in his military incarnation left no choice to them except that of supporting the Indian National Army.

I am giving these facts only to lead to a consideration of the current situation in which Hindu militarism is a genuine and powerful force, influencing Indian foreign policy. It is all the more dangerous because it is unanalysed, unexposed, and insidious. No one is likely to understand the actions of the Hindu government of India in the international sphere during the last fifteen years without recognizing the existence of a strong under-current of militarism among the people of the country. In fact, it was only natural that the Hindu militarism, after remaining suppressed but smouldering during British rule, should, as soon as an opportunity for a voluntary and unfettered choice presented itself, reassert itself and strongly influence the attitude of the Hindus in their international relations, sweeping aside the temporary, artificial, and largely opportunistic profession of non-violence in politics. One significant fact about the new militarism should be specially noted: that today it is most assertive and irresponsible precisely in that class in Hindu society which was the least militaristic in the past and most devoted to non-violence, and this, not of the refurbished Gandhian kind, but traditional—namely, in the Hindus of the lower middle-class and trading castes of the Gangetic plain. They have now also become the sons of Moloch, in addition to being the sons of Mammon.

Before I deal with the new militarism I should like, however, to say a word about my attempts at satisfying the innate Hindu militarism in myself. I was bound to be drawn and enlisted by it, but at all events I tried to give it a rationalistic and intellectual form. From the age of twelve to about the age of fifty, under the influence of the militarism, I devoted myself to a fairly thorough study of military history, which at first was certainly like an utterly futile pre-occupation without any practical value. But during the second World War it gained for me the position of a commentator in the Government's broadcasting organization on a salary which at the start was four times that of any income I had till the age of forty,

and which before I retired became ten times as much. But, of course, my intangible satisfactions have been greater; among them I include wholly unsolicited appreciations from General J. F. C. Fuller and Captain B. H. Liddell Hart. After reading an article of mine Captain Liddell Hart was even kind enough to call me, an amateurish and obscure student of military history, a 'fellow-student of war'.

But one intangible satisfaction I have never had. I could not in the slightest degree influence or reshape the sub-rational, out-of-date, and yet insatiable militarism of fellow-Hindus. At first it was my object to promote a more intelligent interest in military matters. Realizing that sooner or later India was likely to become independent and in that event Indians were bound to be called upon to deal with military problems, I pleaded for military culture. In a paper read before the teachers of Calcutta University on March 22, 1940, I said:

We in India could not expect to make contributions to military theory in the present state of our knowledge. It is too early for us to be ambitious. But our universities could even now do a great deal to raise and maintain the level of military culture. . . . Military culture is not perhaps a happy phrase, but it adequately conveys the notion of combined knowledge and intelligent appreciation of the different factors involved in wars which is so essential for organizing the defence of a country. This military culture, which has always characterized the ruling classes of Europe, has become more of a necessity with the extension of democracy. . . . It is the easiest thing for an ignorant and unintelligent democracy to wreck the defences of a country through unfounded optimism and equally unfounded panic.

Then I dealt with the military culture or rather the absence of it in the major political party of India. In regard to military culture, I continued, 'the most important political organization of India, the Congress, is perhaps the

worst offender. During the past few years it has pronounced itself on the various aspects of defence in a way that must have dismayed everyone who takes an informed interest in the question.'

That was said in 1940. But at that time, even with my disillusionment with the Congress, I could not foresee that the politicians of that party would cause me even greater dismay by ineptitude of an opposite kind. After the war my best military advice to my people was like Mr Punch's to the young man about to marry, 'Don't!' I possessed enough common sense to realize that for India to continue in the military path in the atomic age was senseless folly; for us not even a rational preoccupation with conventional war was permissible. All of it was pointless. So I lost even my theoretical interest in military studies, and ceased to be militaristic, which I had been all my life.

But not so my countrymen and fellow-Hindus. Their ignorance of military matters remained as complete as ever, but their bellicosity grew. A modern Hindu is nothing if he is not ready to sacrifice all substantial interests to satisfy his passions, which are never strong enough to conquer anything but always too strong for reason and self-restraint. When I was young I read that to men in general the satisfaction of a pride was infinitely more alluring than the satisfaction of an interest. I do not think that any collective group of human beings has proved the truth of that observation more decisively than the modern Hindus.

Such a deep-seated passion as their militarism was bound to be more coercive. So, as soon as independence came, with many other evil passions, an incompetent jingoism came to possess them, and it has been bedevilling their public policies since then, creating an unbearable financial burden and diverting attention from constructive activity. The first object of their new militarism was Pakistan, and the jingoistic illusion which they nursed at first was the idea of putting an end to the existence of Pakistan by what they thought would be a walkover, or

to put it in their own jargon, mere police action. Patel, who was then regarded as the strong man of India, even went to the length of declaring on one occasion that if India were so minded she could sweep up to Peshawar. When this was seen to be impossible, Hindu militarism created the myth of military danger from Pakistan and battened itself on it.

This was, however, only a vapid and negative satisfaction, and the martial Hindu soul spoiled for a fight. So the expedition to Goa was launched. By that time the border dispute with China was already some years old, and the easy success with Portugal naturally encouraged the hope of a similar victory over China. As the saying goes: *l'appétit vient en mangeant*. So a futile and at the same time dangerous conflict with China was gratuitously courted, and in this sorry business Hindu militarism played a larger part than in the quarrels with Pakistan and the occupation of Goa. Half of the motive power behind the former was at least supplied by the undying hatred of the Hindu for the Muslim, and in the second the resentment against a survival of European imperialism was as great a force. But in regard to the conflict with China it can be asserted with confidence that it was inspired almost wholly by Hindu jingoism, with the Hindu possessiveness as a second underlying factor.

It is not a part of the plan of this book to deal with current political questions. None the less, the statements I have just made may appear to be too sweeping and even slapdash. Therefore I shall set down a few facts about the Indo-Chinese conflict to show that I have good reasons for saying what I have said. Also, these facts will reveal that the Hindus remain as traditional in their militarism as they are in everything else. This incidental demonstration is, however, offered without prejudice to anything I shall have to say more formally in the future.

Writing in February, 1963, I venture to set down that the actual dispute about the Indo-Chinese frontier was and remains a minor and even trivial affair, with no

danger to the real integrity of India. It should never have been allowed to develop into a political crisis, far less a military one. There was nothing in it which should have put the two greatest countries in Asia at war with each other, and provided a windfall to a *tertius gaudens*, which has gone almost delirious with joy. I did not and cannot, indeed, approve of the low opportunism which dragged Buddhist ethics into a question of politics, but I would assert most emphatically that the policy of friendly co-operation with China was not only sound but imperative. It should not have been sacrificed to keep what once was a British imperial frontier and was bequeathed to the Hindus as a juridical frontier. In any case the men who had accepted the partition of real India and divided and ruined two of the greatest provinces of the country had no right, after swallowing that camel, to strain at the gnat which bears the name of a British civil servant. Furthermore, the people and the government of India are now in sympathy with the Pukhtunistan movement, and do not concede to the Durand Line at least as much validity as in their eye the MacMahon Line has.

Again, in February, 1963, at the risk of being proved a fool and taking the chance of being seen to be a prophet, I say that the Indo-Chinese border dispute, together with the 'war' it has brought about, will remain passive and insignificant, unless—this *unless* is something which, tragically, cannot be ruled out altogether—with even greater folly than any we displayed in the past we allow the United States to wage its war with China through us. The actual border question might be settled by negotiation by the time the book will be published, but the more likely prospect is that it will remain frozen in a stalemate as unfortunate as that with Pakistan, and become a burden of Atlas, psychologically and economically.

There are very large interests which are bent on keeping the dispute and the war hysteria alive among the people of India. These are exploiting it for their purpose, and these interests are both foreign and domestic. The un-

holy alliance between the two is faking a picture of danger to India from Chinese imperialistic expansion, when none exists, and the militaristic stupidity of the Hindus in general makes this exploitation possible.

Let me, however, revert to the main argument that the open conflict with China was due to the pressure exerted by Hindu jingoism. It is, of course, impossible to produce evidence for the opinion, though its soundness will be hardly disputed, that, left to himself, Jawaharlal Nehru would have arrived at a settlement with China which would have been both satisfactory and honourable. But the pitch was queered for him by the Hindu militaristic feeling and the unwillingness of all Hindus to give up anything they possess. Faced with a clash between his judgment and his desire for popularity, Nehru showed an astonishing vacillation, blowing hot and cold about China with surprising inconsistency. At times I did hope that he might still be able to avert the final act of folly, but having watched his career and knowing his character, I also feared that he was heading towards the inevitable surrender to demagogy.

For more than forty years I have seen one fatal weakness in him, his incapacity to stand up to more determined colleagues and still less to Hindu fanaticism, though he dislikes and even hates Hindu ideas and passions. It was these which dragooned him into that intransigent attitude in 1946 and 1947 which made all compromise with the Muslims impossible and which created Pakistan, and it was the same forces which after the creation of Pakistan made it impossible for India to live in peace and friendliness with that country. He found himself severely criticized for even arriving at a very moderate agreement with Pakistan, and the hornet's nest that he drew round his head after the transfer of a small village area in Bengal to that country seems to have knocked the wind out of him for any further resistance to Hindu fanaticism.

Therefore he yields and has always been yielding to popular feeling whenever he thinks, and as a rule wrongly, that it is too strong for him. Moreover, this ill-judged yielding in him has an extraordinary feature: he then becomes a whole-hearted and even passionate advocate of the very courses which he condemned before. For instance, from time to time he lost his patience at the Hindu bluster against China and employed strong language about it, but when at last he gave in he showed an exuberance which was not less than that of his critics. All the spokesmen of the Opposition who wanted to exploit the public feeling about China in order to discredit him must have been wholly disconcerted to find him stealing the wind out of their sails.

Thus it was that the curtain on the open conflict with China rose in October, 1962, with an amazingly irresponsible statement from Mr Nehru on the 12th, just on the eve of his departure for Ceylon. The next morning, on opening my paper, I found an eight-column banner heading: "ARMY ORDERED TO RID THE N.E.F.A. OF THE CHINESE." Below it I read the following news story:

For the first time since the N.E.F.A. operations began, Mr Nehru categorically stated that the armed forces had been ordered to throw the Chinese aggressors out of N.E.F.A.

'Our instructions are to free our territory,' he said. But when asked how soon this would happen, he replied:

'I cannot fix a date. That is entirely for the Army.'

He pointed out that wintry conditions had set in already in the region, and the Chinese were "strongly positioned" because they were in large numbers and were situated on higher ground. Moreover, the main Chinese base on their side of the border was quite near.

One is reminded by this announcement of the French statesman Ollivier's words about the opening of the war with Prussia in 1870: 'From this day begins . . . a great responsibility; we accept it *with a light heart*.' But

there was no one in India to voice the criticism by Thiers of this rash step: 'Do you wish that the whole of Europe should say that when the substance was conceded, for a question of form you decided to shed torrents of blood? I decline the responsibility for a war for which there is so little justification.'*

Ollivier's speech cost him his political career, and Thiers' gained him his later position. But in India when the news of the disasters began to pour in, no one asked the relevant questions about them in the light of Nehru's statement: How was it that the Indian army was taken by surprise when it had been ordered to open an offensive? How could the Chinese be accused of treachery? Had the army acted on its instructions and begun an attack? If not, why not? And why had the Prime Minister of India divulged an operational order before it was acted upon? Instead, there was an exhibition of undignified emotionalism inconceivable in any other country in the world, which might be described as mafficking in defeat.

The Government of India proclaimed a state of emergency, talked of fighting on till victory, discussed conscription, and made military training compulsory for university students. The new Defence Minister of India, who comes from the Maratha country, remembered the third battle of Panipat and declared that he was from

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* I have to add that Lord Mountbatten encouraged this folly in the Government of India and in his friend Mr Nehru, who looked up to him in military matters. Speaking at the Citadel, the military college of South Carolina on October 12, 1959, he declared that India was 'adequately strong to hold her own' against China in a military sense. He said that India had a 'magnificent army, a capable air force, and a good navy brought up by the British. We think it's first-class.' 'Look at the terrain,' Lord Mountbatten told the assembled newspaper reporters, 'and tell me how the Chinese can invade. I'd hate to plan that campaign.' Obviously, Lord Mountbatten had forgotten the military truism, which the 14th Army under his own command had demonstrated afresh, that no terrain by itself can stop a determined army.

a State 'where men who go out to fight battles either defeat the enemy or do not come back at all'. In the Punjab the ministers decided to appear in the legislature in military uniform. Pretty schoolgirls drilled in the squares and even dug air-raid trenches, without sacrificing smartness in dress. M.P.s, male as well as female, even though not over-slim, lay prone on the ground and pulled the triggers of rifles, explaining that thereby they wanted to set an example to the people. Mr G. D. Birla, the great financier and industrialist, gave a miniature rifle range to the Government so that the citizens of Delhi might learn to shoot with the .22 rifle. Students demonstrated rowdily, and the rickshaw-pullers in a disciplined manner, against the Chinese. Little boys in my street, as everywhere else, shouted 'Chou En-lai, hai hai! (Alas, alas! for Chou En-lai).' The Press and the radio poured out crude and low abuse.

While all this was going on at home (valour like charity beginning there), on the war front not a shot was fired except on the initiative of the Chinese. When they announced their ceasefire, the Government of India kept contemptuously silent, but was obviously glad to accept it in fact. The more difficult problems raised by the war, including logistical ones, were handed over to foreigners.

The expression of the Hindu duality did not, however, end there. The reverse side of the new Hindu militarism had some characteristic features. Everybody sought personal publicity through the war so far as he or she could. A minister gave blood for the wounded soldiers and had her picture published in the papers, or at least allowed it to be published. Lastly, not for a moment was the eye shut to the main chance. From the third or fourth day of the Chinese attack the Government spokesmen began to appeal for money and gold as gifts from the people, and succeeded in getting very large contributions. These appeals have now been followed up by proposals for heavy taxation, which the people are quite ready to

bear. There is no doubt that the war with China has been a financial windfall for the Government, and it may be assumed that nothing short of a deep-seated and genuine militarism could have produced such readiness in the Hindus to part with money.

Characteristic as all this is of the degenerate contemporary form of the Old Hindu military ardour, I shall not discuss these expressions here. But I cannot leave this topic without drawing attention to what is perhaps the most significant feature of the new militarism: that even in its feeble and degraded expression it is consistent with the traditional militarism of the Hindus. It is impossible for any Hindu to make war without falling back on the concept of Dharma Yuddha or a war of righteousness, and the Government of India, which calls itself secular, has been inevitably driven to fall back on Dharma to carry on and inspirit its war with China.

The cry of Dharma was raised soon enough. On November 14th, 1962, I read the following letter in my newspaper under the heading: BATTLE OF DHARMA:

Let us forget that the ultimate force behind our coming victory against the Chinese aggressors would be God. Ours is a battle of *dharma* against *adharma*. So let us fix a day for mass prayers in private homes, places of worship and other places. Sincere prayer is a powerful weapon against injustice—yours, etc., K. K. Bajaj, V. M. Iyer, J. J. Misra, S. R. Gopalakrishnan, S. Rajagopalan, and Y. C. S. Vidyarthi.

Four days later I came upon a similar heading 'VICTORY OF DHARMA', and was delighted to find that it was a report of a speech by no less a person than the President of the Republic of India, Dr Radhakrishnan. He had gone to Poona to preside over the publication of the last volume of the history of Hindu sacred law by the foremost Hindu scholar on the subject, P. V. Kane. But Dr Radhakrishnan did not speak on this occasion as an academician, of an academician. He im-

proved on the occasion by declaring that victory was bound to come 'so long as we act in a righteous way—in accordance with the Dharma Sastra that has been handed down to us'. All-India Radio, the Government's broadcasting organization, followed the example of the President and gave readings from the Mahabharata and other Hindu sacred texts.

Speaking again about a month later, the President quoted the well-known Sanskrit proverb *Vira-bhogya vasundhara*, the earth is enjoyed by the brave, and also the last couplet of the Gita: 'Where Krishna is the director of discipline, and Arjuna the archer and warrior there was bound to be good fortune, victory, prosperity, and statecraft.' I certainly thought that it was rather odd for the head of a secular state to go on quoting Hindu scriptures continually. But if I express any such opinion before fellow-Hindus they explain away the statement by saying that it has nothing to do with Dr Radhakrishnan's belief in Hindu sacred books, but, for policy's sake, has to be put in a form intelligible and appealing to the rustic and orthodox Hindu audiences in Hindu villages, and that what he really had in mind when speaking of Krishna and Arjuna was the combination of his own counsels with the statecraft of Nehru. I cannot, however, accept their explanation of Dr Radhakrishnan's references to the Gita and other Hindu books, and I attribute them to the underlying and indestructible Hinduism of every Hindu.

When the President of India, whom all Hindus and even the outside world regard as the philosopher-statesman of Plato's dream, can be so true to type, mere poets could be expected to be the drummer boys of Hindu militarism. Thus, it was not with any surprise that I saw posters appearing all over Delhi to this effect:

Chinka lalkar
Kaviyonka hunkar. . . .

which translated means 'The bluff of China, and the battle-yell of the poets', and it was announced that the

poets were going to hold a conference which was described as Vira-ras Kavi Sammelan, i.e. conference of the poets of the martial spirit and emotion. It was duly held, and was described in one newspaper report, as a 'thrilling programme conducted in a tense atmosphere, and vividly reflective of the upsurge of national sentiments aroused by China's naked and ruthless aggression'.

If, however, it is assumed that the coercive power of Hindu traditions stops at this that would be a mistake. It is strong enough to make anyone born a Hindu toe the line, and even Nehru was made to do this. Thus it happened that when the war with China compelled him to draw on the Hindu traditions, he went to the only source at his disposal, namely, Mahatma Gandhi. At least three times till the time of writing he has cited the authority of his master in support of the war with China. The last time when he did so was on the day of the fifteenth anniversary of the assassination of Mahatma Gandhi. It did not occur to the Beloved Disciple of the Prophet of Non-violence that even though Gandhi might have supported the Indian intervention in Kashmir, his name should not have been dragged into a war on the day of his murder by a militaristic Hindu fanatic.

But if these modern Hindus have simply obeyed their ancient traditions in claiming to wage a war of righteousness against China, they have not been less true to them in accusing China of treachery, trickery, and other forms of unrighteousness. For them there could not be, and there was not, any question of getting away from the established pattern of Hindu behaviour. For the charges against China, too, there is precedent in the Mahabharata. The Kurus led by their wicked prince Duryodhana, as is well known, won the kingdom of the Pandava brothers in a game of dice played unfairly, and sent them into exile. When they came back after many years the Kurus still refused to give back the kingdom. Then the Pandavas begged humbly for only five villages for the

five brothers. Even this Duryodhana refused, saying, 'Not even as much land as can be covered by the point of a needle without fighting!' Thus came about the famous battle of Kurukshetra, in which the Pandavas won, though not without resorting to ruses against their powerful enemies, which were counselled by Krishna himself. In the last round Duryodhana himself was hit below the belt by Bhima, and lay mortally wounded. He then attacked Krishna in abusive language, some of which I translate below:

O son of the servant of Kamsa! It was at your signal that Bhima struck me down in unfair fighting, and do you not feel shame for it? It was through the unrighteous means suggested by you that the host of kings who were fighting righteously for me were killed. . . . There is no one to equal you in vileness of character, cruelty, and shamelessness. If you had fought fairly you would never have had your victory over us. I, with the kings allied to me, was devoted to Dharma, righteousness, and therefore we have been done to death by your dishonourable un-Aryan ruses.

The remarkable similarity between this speech in the Mahabharata and the abuse of China by the Indian leaders and the Press will strike every reader.

But not less interesting is the fact that in having dealings with us Hindus, even the modern and rationalistic Western Powers cannot but conform to the Hindu traditions. As it happened, Duryodhana still had three great warriors surviving on his side. They were Asvatthama, Kripacharya, and Kritavarma. In great rage they came rushing to the battlefield and vowed to avenge Duryodhana, and Asvatthama did kill the five young sons of the Pandavas by entering their camp at night. The Western Powers which came to the succour of India might well be compared to these warriors, and the wrath of the United States was very much like the wrath of Asvatthama.

And quite fitly the Americans who helped India were honoured in a manner which showed that modern Hindus had not forgotten their Mahabharata. They presented Colonel Rusk who commanded the task force of the 322nd American Air Division in India with a model of the battle of Kurukshetra! This was done at the reception in the Government-owned hotel named after the pacifistic Asoka. The American colonel was so deeply moved by the spontaneity of the address that he could only mutter 'Thank you!' and not a word more. He should have been 'oriented' at least to say, *'Yato dharma-stato jaya,'* where there is Dharma, righteousness, there is bound to be victory.' The model of Kurukshetra was certainly not as historical and scientific as the reconstruction of the battle of Cannae by the great German military historian Hans Delbrück, which made Schlieffen and the Great German General Staff regard Cannae as the ideal battle of double envelopment. But, at all events, it proves my thesis, and adds a last light touch to this lengthy excursus on the militarism of the Hindus.

Now, if the Hindus were and remain basically militaristic, though at present only inefficiently and grotesquely so, where does their non-violence stand? No student of Hindu history should have the slightest hesitation in answering the question. The very extremism of the doctrine of non-violence as preached by the Hindus, taken with the practice of a degenerate compassion, should serve to indicate that both were a panic-stricken recoil from something equally extreme in the opposite direction. So it happens to be in actual fact.

The non-violence was as irrational as the violence. The pendulum always swings farthest when it has been at its highest level on the other side. It must not be forgotten that Christian non-violence was a reaction from the Roman violence, also Judaic violence, especially as practised by fanatical sects or secret societies like the Sicarii or Zealots. The Germanic peoples also adopted Christianity with fervour because it offered relief and a refuge from

their own love of fighting. Modern India, on the other hand, has shown the relationship between violence and non-violence in the converse. In its application to the Indian nationalist movement the Gandhian doctrine of non-violence led to some of the bloodiest riots, one of which compelled him in 1922 to call off the Non-co-operation movement.

Even the word for non-violence in Sanskrit and in all modern Indian languages of Sanskritic origins, which is *ahimsa,* shows that it is a corrective to a basic trait which is its opposite. The Hindus did not preach love of man as a positive virtue, but only abstention from violence and killing. *Himsa* is the Sanskrit word for violence and killing, and the word for its opposite was formed by prefixing an alpha privative. So we have *A* (which means the same thing as *non-* or *un-*, and is equivalent to the Greek *a*) plus *himsa,* which shows that *himsa* (violence) is the positive trait, and *ahimsa* a negative virtue.

So, Hindu non-violence falls in its natural place in the Hindu way of life, in spite of being a feckless emotion. But the difference between it and the pacifism which the Hindus have been airing since they became independent in 1947 is that the one is native and the other imported. In other words, the non-violence is genuine, and the pacifism counterfeit. The first may be amusing or even irritating owing to its irrational extravagance, but it was and remains honest. The pacifism, in contrast, is without any roots in the Hindu tradition, and therefore without that strength which only a long tradition can give to Hindu principles, emotions, and actions. At no time in the past did the Hindus show themselves to be pacifistic and anti-militaristic, and even in the epoch of independence they have not showed themselves to be so in the pursuit of their *Realpolitik.*

The pacifistic paint on Indian foreign policy is the work of Nehru the decorator, and it comes from his ideological keg. His political ideas are those of the Western Leftists of the inter-war epoch, and he would naturally be a paci-

fist and internationalist. As the Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of India, he could hardly abandon these ideas even if he felt inclined to, but there was also an unconscious realization by him and his countrymen that India stood to gain by supporting pacifism. By appearing in the world and on the U.N. forum as a champion of peace and international amity and as an opponent of the Cold War and nuclear tests, India has certainly acquired immense prestige in the eye of a public which is opposed to war both from fear and from idealism, and knows virtually nothing of the home cockpit in which the foreign policy of the Hindus is seen in its practical form of a fighting cock.

In addition, there are one or two subconscious and therefore insidious feelings, shared in common by all the Asiatic peoples once subject to European imperialism, which are at work in maintaining the pacifistic varnish of their policies. For one thing, all these peoples are nervous about the possibility of a reassertion of European power in its old sphere of influence, and they are induced by an instinctive sense of safety to look upon military weakness in the West as the most effective safeguard against it. Nobody could have failed to notice that pacifism in India and in all these countries works only against the military preparations of the Western Powers, and never against those of their own. It cannot restrain senseless and extravagant military expenditure which is strangling the finances of all of them, nor even can it moderate the sabre-rattling against weak neighbours.

Next, there is a new national vanity which can be satisfied solely by recommending pacifism and disarmament to the Western countries. These latter have, of course, laid the trap for themselves. They, and especially the United States, have for thoroughly opportunistic reasons brought into existence through the U.N. an artificial appearance of equality in the international sphere between themselves on the one hand and minor and very small Powers on the other. The pigmies concerned naturally enjoy this

appearance of equality, and equally naturally they are trying to translate it into a reality, which could be done only by eliminating the military power of the West as a factor in international relations. It is a dream of feeble minds, but the West itself has lent plausibility to it. In this the West and Asia are engaged in a game of cross-purposes: the West, particularly the United States, is trying to create military power in the countries of Asia, whereas these countries want to make the United States and the West militarily impotent, and behind both the attempts stands a common calculation of self-interest which is neither intelligent nor edifying.

I hope that even though I have been able to analyse only one pair of traits, I have been able to make out a case for my theory that the Hindus are torn by their internal psychological tussles. When all the internal contradictions are passed in review they bewilder even a native. The foreigner would feel that he is before a phantasmagoric world. In fact, many are as puzzled and anxious as the Queen was at the behaviour of her son Hamlet. But I have not heard any fellow-Indian giving them the answer of Polonius, which I give:

> I will be brief—your noble son is mad:
> Mad call I it, for to define true madness,
> What is't but to be nothing else but mad?

But do I hear you saying 'More matter, with less art?' Then I reply:

> . . . I swear I use no art at all.
> That he is mad 'tis true, 'tis true, 'tis pity,
> And pity 'tis 'tis true—a foolish figure,
> But farewell it, for I will use no art. . . .

Life-long observation has convinced me that there is a streak of insanity in the Hindus and that nobody will arrive at a correct appraisement of Hindu private and public behaviour on the supposition that they have a normal personality. This madness lurks within their ordinary

workaday self like a monomania, and the nature of the alienation can even be defined in the psychiatrist's terms —it is partly dementia praecox, and partly paranoia. In all Hindu activities, especially in the public sphere, can be detected clear signs of either a feebleness of mental faculties or a perversion of them.

If anyone scouts this hypothesis I would ask him to remember the recent history of the German and the Japanese people when they forced disastrous wars on mankind. No other supposition except temporary collective insanity can account for the Nazi phase of German history or the courting of a war with the United States by the Japanese. These examples led me to the conclusion that human groups, like individuals, can go mad. I have only extended the view to the Hindus. But the Hindus show two important differences in their collective madness: first, their insane behaviour is feebler in expression and therefore less catastrophic for the rest of mankind, though very harmful to themselves; secondly, it is continuous and permanent, and cannot be expected to pass off as the German and the Japanese madness has done.

But a question arises here. If the Hindus are really insane in their collective life, how does it happen that they have survived so long instead of being torn asunder as a human group by their abnormalities and internal stresses? One would expect such acids as the Hindu existence has generated to eat through the cells of their society. This is a pertinent and forceful question, but one which is also easy to answer. The survival of the Hindus is due to the fact that nine-tenths of Hindu society consists of an inert element which is impervious to the active malignancy of the one-tenth. The society is like the atmosphere in which four-fifths of nitrogen prevents the one-fifth of oxygen from burning up the earth.

The peasant and artisan population of India has a form of culture which has hardly been moulded by the historic civilizations of the country. This basic population has only been dyed by the civilizations without being transformed

in substance. Brushing aside minor adaptations the peasant-artisan of India remains the Bronze Age man in all his outlooks and aptitudes. An attempt is now being made to modernize him through industrialization. But the effect, so far as there has been any effect at all, can be observed in all its ghastliness in the big cities. To go through the areas of these cities in which the industrial population lives is to have the feeling of a nightmare, for in them masses of human beings are seen to live in a state of squalor and economic enslavement, and from the sociologist's point in a state of social pulverization. They do not form a stable or coherent social class, but constitute an amorphous, piled up, and featureless detritus of the stratified human rocks of rural India. It is so painful to look on this human débris that one remembers with thankfulness that the vast majority of the common people of India remain in their villages.

It is the inertia of these masses that has saved Hindu society from decomposition, from disappearance in history. The educated modern Hindu is given to endless bragging about the survival of Hindu civilization when all other ancient ones have vanished. But he has no idea of what has contributed to the survival. A noted Bengali writer was so irritated by this boasting that he ridiculed it in a neat epigram: The mammoth is extinct but the cockroach survives. The remark is true if the depreciatory suggestion is eliminated from it. The cockroach which has survived is not a lowly insect pest, but a simple and strong human being who remains strong and simple by refusing to become complex. It is he who is his collective mass forms the skeleton of Hindu society, which resists the sickness, the shocks, and the sepsis which the Hindu flesh is heir to. The modern Hindu dreads nothing more than solitude and contemplation. He is always in the marketplace, talking, talking, talking. Otherwise, he would have heard the voice of the timeless skeleton within him.

All this speculation and hypothesis might seem to be madness in one Hindu rather than in the rest who exist in millions. But I would not argue:

> Mad let us grant him then, and now remains
> That we find out the cause of this effect,
> Or rather say, the cause of this defect,
> For this effect defective comes by cause.

Chapter 6

THE VICTIMS OF CIRCE

THE solution of even the most complex of problems is often a matter of finding the right clues, be they ever so faint at the start. As it happens, there is at least one ready-to-hand for understanding the Hindus, and I wonder why it has never been followed, nor to my knowledge even thought of. This is the conduct and behaviour of the English when they were ruling India. In my book on England I have described in brief the effect of the Indian climate and weather on the English character, and I hope I shall be permitted to quote the passage. After going to England and feeling the effect of the English weather on myself I became aware of what its converse could be, and I wrote:

After experiencing the English weather I had no difficulty in understanding why Englishmen became so offensive in India, losing their usual kindliness and equability in human relations. Their sense of proportion broke down, the habit of understatement disappeared, and they became extremists with an incredible stridency in their opinions, which became raw and crude. In many cases they degenerated into outright cads, and the more sensi-

tive or specialized the English organism, the more warped it became.

The only way to avert this unconscious transformation was to bring about a deliberate one—first and foremost, in the direction of absolute simplicity. No one saw this more clearly and with greater intuitive insight than Kipling. He admonished his countrymen in India to give up trying to remain as complex and nuanced as they were born and taught to be, and to become instead clean wolves:

> Wash daily from nose-tip to tail-tip; drink deeply,
> but never too deep;
> And remember the night is for hunting, and
> forget not the day is for sleep.

(The duty of sleeping in India is neglected in these days not only by the British but by all Occidentals, and the result is a perceptible softening of the brain. This would have been harmful if they had to govern the country instead of only flattering us.)

Kipling could write with extreme subtlety of English life, but that manner he reserved for the home product, adopting a stark style for India, obeying his own insight. I often say that *Wind in the Willows* is the fable of the Englishman at home, and *The Jungle Book* that of the Englishman in India. The British military authorities out here, who were the most perfect intuitive empiricists seen in history, realized the need for simplification, and they were not mealy-mouthed in their advocacy of it. The following is from a book of instructions compiled by the General Staff in India for British soldiers:

There are three kinds of Venereal Disease. They are contracted by sexual intercourse with diseased women: nearly every Indian wayside prostitute suffers from one or more of these diseases. The chief means of prevention are—(1) Avoid sexual intercourse; (2) immediate washing of the penis with soap and water after sexual in-

tercourse; (3) use ahe Prophylactic Treatment Room within one hour; (4) report sick *at once* if you think you are infected.

The British soldier back home might well say:

Tho' I walks with fifty 'ousemaids outer Chelsea
to the Strand,
An' they talks a lot o' lovin', but wot do
they understand?

Any attempt at carrying over the sophistication of life at home to India, led, in any case, to failure and degeneration, and at times to calamity and even death. The dainty Rose Aylmer who possessed not only beauty but every virtue and every grace which even the most fastidious Englishman could expect in a woman, died in Calcutta of eating too much pineapple. When the Englishman drank in India he drank in hogsheads. Even one of the most delightful frills of English life, flirtation, become dangerous here. The P. & O. boat was a terrible trap, and what was a mere bagatelle or *menu plaisir* on its decks reappeared as the pursuit of a spectral fury in a phantom rickshaw at Simla. The flirting English were an object of ridicule and contempt even to the monkeys of Jakko. As one of these put the matter.

I follow no man's carriage, and no, never in my life
Have I flirted at Peliti's with another Bandar's wife.

The only means of rescuing love from its little emptinesses and worse in the hill-stations was to yoke it to duty on the plains, and give it a formidable external neutrality with complete inwardness, as is seen in Kipling's story of *William the Conqueror*. No wonder Mr Somerset Maugham did not relish that sort of treatment of love. English life in India, if it was to be kept sane and wholesome, had to run, like a train, on rails, and the two rails were patriotism and duty. To allow anybody to slip off that rigid track was to invite disaster as much in public as in private life.

I often asked myself in the olden days why the Indian servants of the British households held such a low opinion of their masters and mistresses. With them it was not simply another case of no man being a hero to his valet. They saw too much. They saw things which outraged their sense of morals and manners, and neither the Sahib nor the Mem Sahib thought enough of them as human beings to put any restraint on themselves or affect any disguise. They gave a blatant exhibition of what the servants looked upon as thoroughly *bé-sharam*, shameless, goings-on.

Behind the looseness stood perversion. Quite a number of Englishmen in India became perverts in sexual life, besides being obsessed with it. I know at first hand that in the late twenties the street before a certain bookshop in Calcutta used to be crowded by the cars of the Sahibs who came there on the English mail day to buy the latest arrivals in the way of erotic books. The trade in such literature and in pornographic pictures was very large and profitable in Calcutta.

The deterioration in collective behaviour was, if anything, worse. The tensions in personal life were bound to spill out into the wider sphere, but even when the private life of the British in India was correct and respectable, their behaviour to the people of the country hardly improved. Perhaps that was the safety-valve through which the strain of living in India found an outlet, and therefore relief. It is strange that while dealing out justice between Indian and Indian they were outstandingly successful, especially before the nationalist movement queered the pitch of impartiality, in regard to relations between themselves and us, the British in India lost all sense of right and wrong, truth and falsehood, charity and malice, and paraded a racial arrogance whose mildest form was a stony silence or in the case of unavoidable meetings an abrupt, businesslike termination without even any wishing back to an Indian's wish, and the worst was an obstreperous violence.

The squalid story is far too well known for me to have to repeat it. Gradually, it became the fundamental assumption of Indo-British personal relations that the less there was of it the better for both the sides, in favour of which at least this was to be said that it was inspired by common sense. In the political and public relationship, the unwritten law was that there was to be no admission of mistakes, and no amends in the nature of an apology. The principle behind that was simple. The British in India argued that, given the disparity in numbers between the rulers and the ruled, the only safeguard for the former was the Indian's belief in their inherent superiority. Therefore nothing was to be done which could create an impression of weakness or fallibility, and undermine the belief. So it became a proverb among us Indians that under British rule the *Hakim* (magistrate, giver of the order) could be changed, but never the *hukm* (the order).

In these circumstances even one of the greatest virtues of the British people, their sense of discipline with its accompaniment of team spirit, often showed itself as a vice. Kipling extolled discipline:

> . . . the strength of the Pack is the Wolf
> and the strength of the Wolf is the Pack.

> Now these are the laws of the Jungle,
> and many and mighty are they;
> But the head and the hoof of the Law and the
> haunch and the hump is—Obey.

He gave the example of the Hindus to emphasize the moral:

> The 'eathen in 'is blindness bows down to wood
> an' stone;
> 'E don't obey no orders unless they is 'is own;
> 'E keeps 'is side-arms awful: 'e leaves 'em all about,
> An' then comes up the Regiment an' pokes the
> 'eathen out.

So far so good. But in its application to Indo-British relations the discipline and team spirit boiled down to the brutal proposition that over every question at issue between the two peoples, the whole of the British community in India was to make common cause against the whole of the Indian community, without reference to the merits of any case. There never was to be any telling on or letting down of a countryman, whoever he might be or whatever he might have done. Even a murderer was to be shielded. Anyone who did not follow that code was a traitor. So there was nothing unexpected in the fact that an imperious Viceroy like Lord Curzon had to swallow insults when he departed from this tradition in the interest of justice. He had a British cavalry regiment punished by transfer to a distant station for not disclosing who among its troopers had fatally beaten a native cook at Simla. But when some time later the regiment rode past in a parade at Delhi the whole of the British community of men and women present there rose in a body and cheered the regiment frantically, while Curzon sat frozen in contempt and anger.

On the whole perimeter of Indo-British relations this façade of cool and deliberate racial arrogance presented itself. But though it never showed any crack outwardly, there was a hollow spot in it which rumbled ominously from time to time. The obverse of British haughtiness had a reverse, and on it there was the figure of something like abject and irrational poltroonry. The life of the British community in India was haunted by a great fear, which never left their imagination. It was the fear of a sudden uprising of the disarmed masses of the country, followed by massacre. This fear was at its highest when British power, too, was absolutely unchallenged and unchallengeable, that is to say, in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. It was the product of the Mutiny, which left an acute anxiety-neurosis as a permanent legacy to the British in India.

Kipling, who gave to every English experience in India its best expression in literature, could not be expected to overlook such a theme. So he made a fable out of the Mutiny in the story *Red Dog*. In it revenge, even to the last ditch, becomes a sacred duty. A wolf who did not belong to any pack, one evening threw himself at Mowgli's feet and was seen to be in a horribly mangled condition. When asked who had done this he replied:

The dhole, the dhole of the Dekkan—Red Dog, the Killer! They came north from the south saying that the Dekkan was empty and killing out by the way. When this moon was new there were four to me—my mate and three cubs. She would teach them to kill on the grass plains, hiding to drive the buck, as we do who are of the open. At midnight I heard them together, full tongue on the trail. At the dawn-wind I found them stiff in the grass—four, Free People, four when this moon was new. Then I sought my Blood-Right, and found the dhole.

It was thus that they brought the news of Kabul or Cawnpore. When asked how many wild dogs there were, the wounded wolf replied:

I do not know. Three of them will kill no more, but at the last they drove me like the buck; on my three legs they drove me. Look, Free People!

When he was given some food, he said humbly:

This shall be no loss. Give me a little strength, Free People, and I also will kill. My lair is empty that was full when this moon was new, and the Blood Debt is not all paid.

This explains the terrible revenge taken by Colonel Neill after the recovery of Cawnpore. And this is how the story ends:

But of all the Pack of two hundred fighting dholes, whose boast was that all Jungles were their Jungle, and

that no living thing could stand before them, not one returned to the Dekkan to carry that word.

This ending, strong as it is, was however no improvement on the conclusion by Lord Roberts of his account of the battle at Lucknow: 'Eventually all the rebels were killed, save three or four who dropped over the wall on the city side. It is to be hoped they lived to tell the tale of the dauntless courage which carried everything before it.'—British courage, of course!

It must be conceded that as Kipling saw it the killing rose to the level of grandeur, as a ruthlessly conceived and practically carried out demonstration of the knightly motto: *Honi soit qui mal y pense.* But when neither the danger nor the readiness to be killed in claiming the blood-right existed the fear became not only absurd, but also cowardly. There is no doubt that the entire British community in India remained possessed by this craven fear till the very end of their rule.

I have now sufficiently outgrown my earlier nationalistic susceptibilities to be able to see where the fear came from. In the light of their own tradition of freedom, the British always had a bad conscience about their rule in India, and seeing the numerical disproportion between themselves and their subjects they naturally imputed as much eagerness to revolt to them as they themselves would have felt in similar circumstances.

However that may be, the fear did infinite harm to Indo-British relations even in normal and very tame conditions. In the military sphere the fear created an obsession with internal security which interfered with the dispositions of the Indian army for its proper military role. For example, during the first World War the Mesopotamian front wanted troops badly. But the Government of India was so nervous about the internal situation that it would not despatch adequate reinforcements, instead it kept fairly large bodies of troops tied down to India. Disaster followed, and the Mesopotamia Commission

which inquired into it thought the fear about the internal situation unjustified.

In the years immediately following that war the Army authorities in India partly exorcised themselves of the internal incubus, but even so they allotted about twenty-seven of the forty-four battalions of British infantry stationed in India to internal security duties. Furthermore, even medium artillery was assigned to this task, and the batteries consisted of 60-pounder guns and 6-inch howitzers!

Over the life of the British community in India, even in peace time, the fear was always a sky of threatening clouds, and so nearly the whole of the British civilian population of arm-bearing age was given military training in volunteer units. In times of trouble the fear rose to the pitch of panic, and created a terrible retaliatory violence. That was why General Dyer thought it necessary when he heard of the murder of some of his countrymen and of the brutal assault on a countrywoman at Amritsar, that he must shoot not only to suppress the riot, but to create deterrent terror. That was also why, after the merciless shooting at Jallianwallah Bagh, a British subaltern declared with exultant joy how much he had enjoyed to see a seething mass of sweating niggers being shot down.

In 1930 I saw another outburst of fear and ferocity after some terroristic outrages by the Bengali revolutionaries. The British community in Calcutta and the districts of Bengal went into an unbelievable hysteria. The Anglican clergymen, who were supported in India by the military budget, justified their share in military expenditure by being some of the fiercest heroes in words. One of them never slept without a revolver under his pillow. In Calcutta British editors would not see a Bengali without keeping their hand on the butt of the pistol in the right-hand drawer, and without two Gurkha guards sandwiching the visitor on two sides. English women went about in terror lest they might be infected with the germs

of venereal disease in the tramcars, in which suspicious-looking handkerchiefs were seen to have been left on the seats.

This fear, together with the unreasonable anxiety to be protected and molly-coddled, was transferred to the external sphere in an even more absurd form during the second World War. After the Japanese attack on Malaya, the British in Calcutta squealed as we never thought such fire-breathing heroes could, even if they were tradesmen. They wanted fighter squadrons to be sent out even from Britain, because they thought there was nothing more urgent than the protection of their skins, the skins of men who had done everything in their power to ruin and destroy the British Empire in India by their lack of intelligence, arrogance, and intransigence. When one of these creatures criticized Lord Beaverbrook for curtly refusing to divert fighter planes from Britain to India I cannot say how disgusted even I as an Indian felt.

Such was the effect of the sojourn in a tropical country and among a potentially hostile indigenous population on the morale of a brave and kindly people. Even the best type of Englishman could not escape being denatured to a greater or lesser degree by his stay in the country. In the cultural sphere a comparable aberration made its appearance. It was a morbid disinclination to share their higher culture with their subjects. No empire has ever been successful without a spirit of proselytization in culture. The Romans realized this in the past as the Russians do today. But the English in India showed a marked disinclination for it. There was hardly one Englishman in India who liked, or even as a matter of policy thought it desirable, that we should write English or absorb Western culture. They had a feeling that by being imitated by us their traditions would be polluted, and even so generous an Englishman as Bethune advised a Bengali who had written in English to go over to Bengali. Of course, this led to the creation of modern Bengali

poetry, but it was no service to the British Empire in India.

This implicit and sometimes explicit condemnation of cultural miscegenation reminds me of a story in the Ramayana. One day it was reported to Rama that the son of a Brahmin had died suddenly. For this untoward event they could only think of one reason—that some impious act had been committed somewhere. Rama went out to investigate, and found that a Sudra named Sambuka was performing religious duties reserved only for the twice-born Aryan. His head was immediately cut off, and upon that the son of the Brahmin came to life again. The gods showered praise and flowers on Rama for protecting Aryan culture in this decisive manner.

This is how the story is told in the Ramayana. By the time the later poet Bhavabhuti wrote about the episode in the eighth century, the original sangfroid of the Aryan in discharging such duties to his community had weakened so far as to permit the intrusion of a note of compassion. So, in the play, *Uttara-Rama-Charita*, we find that Bhavabhuti has made Rama half-regretful of the cruel duty. So he braces himself up to it by saying that a king who had banished his innocent wife to please his subjects had no right to indulge in pity. On the other hand, the Sudra was made to say that there could be no better fulfilment of his devotions than the fact that Rama had come to kill him. So the Sudra went straight to heaven by being killed by an Aryan and sacrificing his life for the Aryan community.

I know that a respectably large number of Englishmen in India would have liked to send us to heaven in this manner for our devotion to the English language and literature, and not a smaller number would have thought that for every Bengali Babu who spoke English an English child was likely, not perhaps to die, but in any case to be born black.

But the most unexpected, and yet when one thinks of the matter the most natural, change came over one of the

greatest qualities of the Englishman—his compassion for weak creatures, which was a complement of his tough inmost fibre. We in the past used to complain that in their behaviour towards the people of the country the British in India showed an intolerable hardness. Certainly, this was not true of them as a class. They never forgot the claim of compassion, but they gave it a very special form, by tropicalizing it, so to speak. One type of compassion was voiced by Mr E. M. Forster in *A Passage to India*. The moral stand of the book boils down to this: that however impossible and even provoking an Indian might be an Englishman has no right to forget that he is a Christian gentleman. His plea for Indo-British friendship always reminds me of the poem by T. Gisborne:

> Turn, turn thy hasty foot aside,
> Nor crush that helpless worm!
> The frame thy wayward looks deride
> Required a God to form.

I came across another example of British compassion in India when I was young. So far as I remember, it was contained in a book of advice and instructions to British motorists by the Automobile Club of Bengal (a British organization in those days). Everybody knows how maddening is the behaviour of Indian pedestrians in the face of power-driven vehicles. But for that reason it was not for an Englishman to knock down these men and women. He was asked only to slow up, touch the inadequately clad behind of the offending Indian with his hot radiator, and then the nimble fellow was bound to jump out of the way, and save the Englishman from the sin of homicide.

My third illustration of British compassion in India, I give *in extenso* from the manual of instructions compiled in 1930 by the General Staff in India and issued by the Government of India. Here is the passage:

If this pamphlet had been written for angels, it would not be necessary to say anything about the results of

assaulting Indians. Unfortunately, however, we are all very human and so we must produce a selfish argument, which will perhaps deter some when all others fail. It is seldom indeed that an Indian is beaten without some unpleasant result for the beater. Sometimes the damage can be repaired by the application of more or less '*baksheesh*'; at others, admonishment or a few days C.B. may be the worse result. But you are lucky if you get off so easily, for one never knows how these cases may end. Quite a slight blow or kick, even a push, none of which would do any permanent damage to a healthy Englishman, will often cause serious harm to an Indian. Many of them suffer from enlarged spleens and other diseases, and any violence, however slight, is likely to set us serious internal troubles which sometimes even end in death. Remember that if once the case gets into the lawcourts, there will probably be a lot of false evidence and exaggeration from witnesses on the other side, and it will almost certainly go hard with you. Though you may have only meant to administer a mild hiding, there can be no doubt that you are responsible for the damage done and you will have to suffer in consequence.

Looking at matters in another way, to beat a man who has neither the strength nor, in most cases, the pluck to stand up to you, is not an achievement to be proud of; it savours of bullying. So, for every reason, keep your hands—and boots—off the Indian.

This extract, I would say, shows former Indo-British relations at their most good-humoured. Many people might consider the whole plea maddening, but the most maddening thing in it is not the apparent heartlessness of the advice, but the literal truth of the statements of fact. The provocation was real and continuous. For instance, no one can dispute the truth of the following statement of facts when the same manual gives instructions to British soldiers about dealing with their Indian servants:

When detected in some dishonest act, he will endeavour to escape the consequences by working on the pas-

sions of his accusers. He knows well that it is a serious offence for a soldier to assault a native and tries by a display of insolence and abuse to aggravate the man who has found him out into striking him. He reasons that his own fault will be lost sight of when the greater offence of the soldier is dealt with. In many cases he is right.

(The military officer who was in charge of this book was the Senior General Staff Officer, M.O. 3, Army Headquarters, Simla.)

I would conclude this argument by saying that the whole situation was so absurd, and every incident seemed to take place in such an odd world of distorting looking-glasses, that one could not even recommend decency without a cynical shrug of the shoulders.

In their day the British tried to get relief from this unending strain in various ways. At first they went as far as they could towards adapting themselves to the climate and to the usages of the country, even to the point of going native. But that resulted in a fantastic extravagance and hypertrophy of the English character. The Englishman in India ran wild, so to say. Therefore, when the introduction of steam travel made that possible they tried another method. The British authorities gave their countrymen long leave to go and recuperate at home. This refreshment kept the British qualities in better shape but worsened the relations with the people of India. In the epoch of furloughs the Englishman in India became less capable of mixing with Indians, grew more intolerant of their ways, and sought refuge in segregation, or in a cold formality of intercourse.

I hope it will not be thought that I am raking up an old scandal for its own sake. I do think that it will bear repetition for the moral it contains in regard to race relations in general, a moral which should be taken to heart by all nations which in one way or another have to exercise overlordship, and are doing so already. In this book, however, my object is only to drive home the point I made at the outset—that a key to the Hindu character is

to be found in the conduct of the British in India. Certain analogies must already have occurred to the reader, among which I would emphasize the following: race pride and sense of superiority; segregation of the conflicting elements; aggressive self-defence; suppression and unconscious ill-treatment of the indigenous population; unwillingness to share culture; and continual mental strain.

The situation in which the British found themselves was the product in the main of the following circumstances: the advent of a people of temperate lands in a tropical country; its unfamiliar and uncongenial climate and weather; the presence of an overwhelming number of natives unreconciled to foreign rule; an ever-present threat of submergence in a lower culture. No calm reasoning could soften the harshness of these contacts. The impatience, the arrogance, the bad temper, the degeneration, in fact, all the unpleasantness was inherent in the situation.

The position of the Aryan, who afterwards became Hindu, was identical. I must particularly stress the first circumstance to which I have referred above. Had the Aryan not been originally a man from a temperate land, mere existence in India could not have made him what he became. The aboriginals have lived in the country for a longer time, but they do not exhibit the characteristic Hindu traits. For these to develop, the type of man had had to be formed by a wholly different environment to begin with. The Aryans were.

Yet the similarity of the situation is the least part of the matter. The more important fact is its prolongation to three thousand years for the Hindus, compared with only two hundred for the British. Multiply the experiences of the latter by fifteen, and you get the Hindu, but still with much less than fifteen times the nastiness. For this at least the Hindu deserves credit. To put the matter briefly, the Hindu is the European distorted, corrupted, and made degenerate by the cruel torrid environment and

by the hostility, both real and imagined, of the true sons of the soil.

If this is accepted and allowed for, there will be, on the part of Westerners, very little bad-tempered comment on the Hindu character; and on the part of the Hindus, not overmuch anger at British arrogance. It is not for any of the sides to cast the first stone at the other. Both are the victims of Circe, with this difference alone that one is more of a sufferer than the other. There should be mutual tolerance based on the conviction of shared degeneration.

I do think that the awareness of equal corruption will be a better emotional basis for the so-called multi-racial Commonwealth, of which much is made, than its professed principle—the pursuit of common aims in world politics, aims which are so rarefied that a large volume of artificial political oxygen is needed to keep that body-politic breathing. After all, it cannot be denied that even the United States and the Soviet Union are pursuing common aims in world affairs, such as peace, disarmament, democracy, technological progress, as well as freedom as understood by each. But that is not preventing them from doing things which might lead to the destruction or near destruction of mankind. Thus, common aims would seem to be very undependable as guarantees for goodwill and co-operation among nations. On the contrary, a frank admission of being equal sinners would at least encourage charity and discourage moral arrogance. That would be a better foundation for international and multi-racial co-operation. I feel sure it would be a stronger Commonwealth if we Hindus and the British, between us, could base it on the remembrance of common sins. In that case, it might be possible even now to bring back South Africa into the Commonwealth and send a Hindu High Commissioner to Pretoria.

Chapter 7

NOSTALGIA FOR THE FORGOTTEN HOME

I AM now going to describe the tribulations of the first Europeans in India, who colonized the country in ancient times as their collateral descendants did North America or Australia at a much later age. But certainly 'tribulation' is not the right word, it is too weak. Even 'ordeal' is inadequate. In reality, it was torture, as cruel as that of Prometheus, but without the grandeur, and finally shorn even of the defiance. It was a pain infinitely prolonged and thereby made dull, still not ceasing to rankle; a malaise always resented, but never understood.

Therefore all the attempts that were made to get rid of it, or for that matter even to become inured to it, were unconscious, subrational, wild, and extravagant. Continuing through the ages, the pain and the reaction to it have, between them, made us Hindus what we are—a combination of putrid flesh and fossil bones. Even now a Hindu who has anything of his European temperament left in him suffers in stoical despair. For the remainder there is only an ache, which like heartbeat has become a part of their physiology.

But the torture has not been of the same kind throughout. During the first two thousand years or so the Hindus suffered as the rulers of the country, and in the next thousand as the subjects of new conquerors. Beginning as a positive charge, the pain became a negative one. Naturally, in the independent state, there was some power in their reaction to the environment, and they exhibited a wrong-headed energy in responding to it. But in the cycle of political servitude which followed the strength ebbed away, every impulse or mood became inverted, and behaviour was oriented very largely towards escape. To their sorrow and pain was added humiliation, and in this

new age of suffering the Hindus looked back to their old suffering as a sort of glory, as if, recalling even that, they could say, *Nessun maggior dolore*. . . .

It was during this period that they learned to cherish and gloat on suffering, to do which—their own scriptures declared—was to succumb to *Tamas*, unclean darkness. Unable to get rid of it, they made a virtue of necessity by making it an enjoyment, and became incapable henceforth of living without grievances. At the same time those of them who retained any mental efficiency became diabolically cunning, and acquired that formidable talent for making capital out of their own weaknesses, as also for exploiting the weaknesses and even more the decencies of others, which has distinguished the Hindus ever since. From this follows a corollary that if you see a Hindu who appears to be pleased with himself and with the world around him, *be on guard*, for you are then facing a thorough rascal, all the more dangerous because of his bland plausibility. I think it was Plato who said that a rich man could never be a good man. I shall say that it is virtually impossible for an optimistic and self-satisfied Hindu to be a good Hindu.

In my young days, when the moral ideas acquired by us from the West in the nineteenth century were still powerful, the Hindus never tried to deny, at least among themselves, that the national character, taken in its norm, was weak when not degraded. But this was attributed to the cumulative effect of many centuries of foreign rule and the deterioration brought about by political subjection. I heard the argument, believed in it, repeated it myself. But I did not have to go far in my reading of Indian history to see that we were putting cause and effect in the wrong order. That is to say, in their actual sequence in history, the degeneracy, instead of being the product of the subjection, was its cause.

In this and the three following chapters I shall describe the suffering and degeneration of the first phase, sometimes descending to later times to draw illustrations re-

levant to my argument. The combination of the two, together with their results, appears to be unique in history. Yet they are largely unperceived and undiscussed even now. This is a sad omission, because many features of the life, character, and thinking of the Hindus in ancient times which seem bewildering can be easily understood on the basis of their unpleasant experiences. These were, in fact, so awful and abnormal that I have thought it necessary to consider them in some detail. I can only hope that the discussion will contribute towards a better understanding of the Hindus of ancient times.

The Aryans had come to India in high hope as if to a promised land. At last they had moved into a country which offered them, not only virgin land, but as much of it as they could wish for. Moreover, it was a country after their heart. Since leaving the plains of Hungary or the Ukraine, they had been passing through or sojourning in geographical settings which in one way or another were alien or uncongenial to them, because these were either mountainous or semi-desert. They were also dominated by strange cultures for which they had no liking. But from the banks of the Indus or the Sutlej they saw plains stretching away before them, to all appearance without end. They were not daunted by the distances like the soldiers of Alexander the Great. On the contrary, they felt elated. To them it was like setting up in a new home as its young masters and at the same time in the home of the ancestors, to continue the *mos majorum* in the *mos juniorum, pietas* in *inventio.*

It seems surprising that the historians of India have not tried to find the reason for one very striking fact about the Aryan settlement in India. It is that, with the whole country to occupy and freedom to go anywhere, the settlers passed over regions which had some of the grandest scenery in the world and chose instead what from the physiographical point of view was the dullest and flattest part of the country, to make it the seat of their re-started life and culture—their *vita nova.*

The Aryan colonial settlement in India extended eastwards and southwards on the northern plain in a series of stretches placed in a descending order of sanctity and appropriateness. The most sacred area, which was assumed to have been created by the gods themselves and whose customs and manners were to be accepted as the standard of conduct by all virtuous men, was also the flattest and dullest even in that whole expanse of flat and dull country. It was a narrow strip of territory between the lost river Saraswati and the Drishadvati whose exact location is uncertain, though both must have belonged to the Sutlej system. This strip was given the name of Brahmavarta, the Land of Brahma.

Ranking next in sanctity was the Karnal plain extending to the Jumna, where the country is so flat and featureless that in the daytime the brown earth can be seen to meet the thin grey-blue line of the horizon, which seems to be the rim of the earth, and at night the stars dip into the same turned up glebe, as they do in the sea. This part of the country was called the Brahmarshi Desa, Land of the Brahmanic or great Sages, and the Hindu sacred law laid down that all men on *earth*—please note the word—were to learn good customs from the Brahmins born in this country.

Further east and south was the Madhya Desa, or Middle Country, and all these hierarchical regions, with the rest of the great plain between the Himalayas and the Vindhyas, were in their whole extent called Aryavarta, Land of the Aryans. One special indication was given in respect of the country which was fit for the Vedic sacrifices: it was the region where the black buck or Indian antelope roamed naturally. The Twice-born were enjoined to live only in these regions, because the rest was the world of the Mlechchhas or unclean barbarians. It is curious that even after the rise of Benares as the Eternal City of the Hindus, and of Pataliputra in Bihar as the political capital, the cultural gradation of the Indo-

Gangetic plain as laid down in the Dharma Sastras, books of sacred law, did not become obsolete.

This clinging to the plains and the significant order of preference can be explained only on one hypothesis: that the Aryans evolving to the pastoral and agricultural states on the plains of south-eastern Europe and even forming the basical features of their religion and culture there, could not feel that they were living their own life in countries which did not have the physiography to which they were used. So, coming to India after many wanderings and finding there something like their old plains, they made themselves at home, and indeed so much so that they completely forgot that they ever had another country.*

But to forget is one thing, and to be happy another. From the very first the new home began to set problems of its own, and soon it looked as if India had no other satisfaction to offer to the Aryans than that of being flat. They discovered quickly enough that the sweetheart whom they had wedded was going to be a termagent of a wife, and there was no escaping from her for the rest of their existence. They learned neither to tolerate their new environment, nor to adapt themselves to it. This, for a people who had no recollection of an original home, was a terrible destiny.

It is interesting to recall here the disillusionment of one of the most fascinating figures of history, Babur, who came to India in search of a kingdom and founded the Mogul Empire. Hindustan, he said, was a country of few charms. What he very much missed was running water in the gardens and houses, which for a man from

* I am giving an instance from the ethnic history of India to show that such a lapse of memory is possible. The Khasis of Assam, a Mongoloid people who migrated from somewhere in S.E. Asia into the region which now bears their name, completely forgot the fact and based their cosmology on the hills round Shillong, especially Lum Dingei and Sopet Bneng, which latter they regarded as the umbilicus of the earth.

the Islamic world was one of the major pleasures of life. The rains he liked, but he also noted that they made all things limp. The bow of Central Asia could not be drawn; armour, books, cloth, and even utensils were affected. The houses did not last long. In the hot season, under the Bull and Twins, Taurus and Gemini, he said, great winds arose and carried so much dust that the earth disappeared from view, for which people gave to these winds the name of the 'Darkener of the Sky'.

Before Babur, that was also the experience of the Aryans. As one finds in a poem attributed to Kalidasa, which might even be an early work of his, the dust raised by intolerable winds from an earth baked by the sun makes it impossible to see anything; the deer is so maddened by thirst that he takes the blue horizon for water and rushes towards it; the snake, unable to bear the heat crawls to the shadow cast by the peacock's tail though it is the bird's natural prey; even the frog seeks cool under the spread hood of the cobra; the lion runs about with a lolling tongue and forgets to kill; the wild pig wallows in the mire and the buffalo in mud puddles; so it goes on. More than a thousand years later, without consulting notes with his Indo-European forebears, an English Aryan also wrote a good deal in the same vein. Here is a sample: 'The deer and the wild pig broke far away to the perished fields of the villages, dying sometimes before the eyes of men too weak to kill them. Chil, the Kite . . . brought news to the beasts, too weak to force their way to fresh hunting-grounds, that the sun was killing the Jungle for three days' flight in every direction.'

Even after living in the country for thousands of years the Hindus have not got used to the heat. I have never seen a people so mad for ice in the hot season as the inhabitants of the Gangetic plain are. They put up the price of ice in June, even beggars rush for it, and they remind me of the polar bears in our zoos. Even I, in spite of my climatological philosophy, go half mad. What exasperates me most is that for a month or two no object

feels cool to the touch even at night. Every material substance, if not hot, is above the temperature of blood.

All this, whether from the Sanskrit poet, or from Babur, Kipling, or me, might sound like high-flown rhetoric to those who have not lived on the great north Indian plain, but certainly not to those who have. The virtues of understatement are not for the men who know it, and it is an affectation to be surprised at extremism in a land of extremes. That is why I dislike the perpetual air-conditioned simper of all Westerners in India today. I do not trust it either, for I have seen the look of ferocity which comes into their eyes if the cooler fails even for a few minutes.

The rains brought relief to the Aryan, Muslim, and Englishman alike, as it does to us now. Babur noted the pleasantness of the season, and for this, too, there is a Hindu precedent. In the Ramayana there is a beautiful description of the rainy season, and it is put in the mouth of Rama himself. After the abduction of Sita by Ravana he was forced by the monsoons to wait in the Malyavan hills, before he could launch his expedition to rescue her. So he whiled away the time by watching the weather and the beauty of the scenery, which he described to his brother.

The Aryans in India were in their way lovers of rain. Indeed, they had to be, because the welfare of an agricultural people depended on it. Thus the Vedic sarcifices for rain are among the most essential and important of their rituals. 'Give us rain', was their constant prayer to their gods, to Indra more especially. But the rain they prayed for was the rain of the West, which in India was precipitated by the Mediterranean cyclones, and not by the monsoons of Asia. They said like the Athenians: 'Rain, beloved Zeus, rain on the cornfields and plains of Attica.' Still what they wanted was the rain which swelled the ears of wheat, and not the rain for thirsty rice. They were repelled by that, and might well be.

Nothing irked the warlike people that the Aryans were more than the enforced slackening of the bow. They felt impatient at being immobilized by the rain and the impassable roads. Even when they had no wife to rescue like Rama, the Aryans ate their hearts out in boredom during these months. So, as soon as they saw thunder-clouds making way for white and fleecy clouds, the moon again pouring liquid silver on their world, the cranes flying, they got ready for war and bloodshed so dear to them, and held their exuberant martial festival.

They found rain unbearable for two very matter-of-fact reasons as well. In the first place, they never learned to build for monsoon rains, and next, these never agreed with their constitution. I know what monsoon rains are. My boyhood was spent not far from the rainiest spot on earth, Cherapoonji, and our rain came down in such torrents that the rice growing on low-lying fields had to grow and rise with the flood, often many inches a day. Otherwise, it rotted away. I have punted, rowed, and sailed on the flooded rice-fields, and I have seen rice stalks ten to twelve feet long.

We Hindus in East Bengal succeeded in adapting ourselves to the monsoons, and came even to love them, by accepting a material revolution. It consisted in going over from the sun-baked mud of the Middle East to the bamboo, grass, reed, and cane of south-east Asia. I can speak from first-hand knowledge about the bamboo economy. We lived in thatched huts, which were supported by bamboo posts and protected by mat walls. These structures were a transformation of architecture into dried vegetation. For us cane and rope were the materials which seemed to hold the world together. Our homesteads were surrounded by bamboo and mat stockades. Our villages were made up of scattered homes, nestling among bamboo clumps, and the houses themselves were each a scattered group of separate huts, so that in going from room to room, not to speak of from house to house, in the rainy season, we had to use umbrellas, or got

drenched. From the outer edge of the village we saw other villages only as bamboo clumps. There never were any roofs or house tops to be normally seen. The people of the other villages saw ours as the same jungle.

But all over northern India, living in a country subject to the monsoons, men built as if they were still in the Middle East. They never carried out any adaptation to the climate and weather. Their huts are still made of sun-baked clay, with a stiffening of lath. The roofs are flat, and they are often of mud and wattle. The villages are nucleated, and in them the houses stand shoulder to shoulder in rows separated only by narrow and miry lanes, reeking of cattle.

I did not understand the villages of the Gangetic plain until I saw a picture of a reconstruction of the earliest agricultural settlement known to history, which was found at Qalat Jarmo in Mesopotamia. 'Why,' I said to myself as I looked at the illustration, 'it might be a village in the U.P.' To this day, from the Punjab to Bihar, the villages and houses are of this late neolithic and early bronze age type. Those who live in them have every right to feel a grievance against rain.

Even in a big city like Delhi, the capital of India, the houses of the common people are of this simple style and material, and, what is not less interesting, the brick houses also are not strongly built. Nearly all the new and pretentious Government offices now being built in New Delhi begin to leak from the beginning. The old residential houses are ramshackle. Therefore, among the citizens of this no mean city, nothing gives rise to more scandalized indignation than wet days. On any day of heavy rain I hear the fire-siren going and the fire-engines ringing and tearing through the streets, and unable to forget the association ask, 'How can a house be on fire in this weather?' My wife corrects me: 'They are going to rescue buried people.' Next morning I read in the newspaper of houses collapsed, and men, women, and

children sometimes dead, sometimes rescued from under the debris by the fire brigade.

People here have hardly learnt even to walk in wet weather. While the rulers of Delhi have tried to march with the times by building sewers in *certain* parts of the city, the common people have not learnt how to avoid man-holes. So, after each heavy downpour, I also read of men being washed into these holes, and even being drowned in the flooded streets, not to speak of drains or ditches.*

The physique of the people has not also adapted itself to the climate of a monsoon country. The constitution of persons brought up in upper India breaks down if they go to the more wet parts of the country, for instance, to Bengal. I think the India infantry battalion which was stationed at Alipur in Calcutta suffered more than the British soldiers in Fort William and at Barrackpore. The monsoon is so harmful to north Indians that for the Burma campaigns the British sent troops from

* I give two instances of what happens during the monsoons in the capital of India. On June 26 we had our first heavy shower in Delhi. The weather office called it 'a pre-monsoon shower' and gave the amount of rainfall as 1.8 cm. With this news I also read the following: 'The first heavy shower of the season claimed a life in Delhi on Friday. A fifteen-year-old boy slipped into a nulla (drain) near Ashoka Hotel and was drowned.' More recently I read in my paper: 'The body of the cyclist, who was drowned in the ganda nulla (sewage channel) on Monday (August 10, 1964) was picked up at Kingway camp on Tuesday—four miles from the scene of the tragedy. The police identified the cyclist as Mr Chiranji Lal Datta (65) of West Patal Nagar, brother of Dr G. L. Datta, Vice-Chancellor of Vikram University. Residents complained that the flooding of the junction of Pusa Road and Bazar Marg near the taxi stand is a regular feature after every downpour.'

I add a few instances of house collapse in Delhi. On July 12, 1964, a two-storeyed house collapsed in Delhi, and nine children and one woman were killed, while six were injured. Two houses collapsed on July 14, three people being killed and three injured. On August 15-16, a number of houses collapsed in and around Delhi, with nineteen casualties—six killed and 13 injured.

the Madras Army, and not from the Bengal Army, which was recruited from the Punjab and U.P.

Therefore all of those who lived in Hindustan, upper India, hated the monsoons and monsoon-ridden Bengal. The Muslim rulers called the province 'Hell overflowing with bread'. Every Hindustani soldier or policeman who had to serve there complained. The workmen grumbled. Even the Afghan usurer who lent money at 200 per cent abused the towns and villages which were making him rich.

Yet if the Hindus found the rain intolerable where could they go to avoid the almost equally intolerable, though in a different way, heat of their own plains? The British solved the problem by going to the hills for relief, and built hill-stations all over the country, especially in the Himalayas, as summer resorts. The Anglicized Hindus have taken over both the habit and the stations. From April onwards they flock to them from every big city on the plains, and modern Hindu journalists send glowing descriptions of the garish lures of these places to their papers, which draw still greater crowds to Simla, Mussoorie, Naini Tal, or Darjeeling. These overdressed crowds and their admirers are not aware, however, of the Hindu tradition in regard to the Himalayas, though the endless files of pilgrims on the mountain-paths keep it alive and show what it is.

The Hindus of ancient times could not dream of treating the Himalayas in this way. To them they were the symbol of other values. In the first place, they were overwhelmed by their beauty and grandeur, and expressed their admiration for both in a very reverent manner. In almost all Sanskrit poetry, epic or classical, and even in the Puranas there are vivid and impressive descriptions of the Himalayas. The name itself—Abode of Snows—was given by the Hindus. Kalidasa's imagination was haunted by them, and in one marmoreal phrase he compared their eternal snows to the piled-up laughter of Siva.

Next, they set an intangible, transcendental value on the Himalayas and articulated them with their religious life. This sprang, however, from their perception, in the first instance, of a purely material connexion—the geographical relationship between the great plain and the great mountain, which at first sight seems to be non-existent. The geography of northern India exhibits a complete external separation between the two. There is no intermingling of hill and plain, and in passing from the one to the other a man passes from one kind of world to another, and the passage is very abrupt. For hundreds of miles the ground shows no rise at all, but suddenly from the farthest edge of the plain to the north, it soars up to heights which are covered with permanent snow.

Yet this separation is only superficial. In reality, there is a profound and unbreakable physical articulation between the plain and the mountain. The Indo-Gangetic plain cannot be made independent of the Himalayas, nor the Himalayas of the plain. Nobody felt this more strongly than Kalidasa, though his knowledge of the direction and alignment of the Himalayas as a mountain-range was not absolutely correct. He described the northern mountains as a Divine Soul—*Devata'tma Himalayo-nama Nagadhiraja*—which dipping into the eastern and western oceans formed the spine and measuring rod of the earth. However figuratively expressed, the notion corresponded to a concrete reality in the geography of India. The entire Gangetic plain has a northward and snow-ward orientation, for which the Hindus have always looked upon the mountain as a front terrace, and never as a hinterland. Without an anchorage in the Himalayas, in the manner of a cantilever bridge, the great plain would hang loose, to be eroded by its wild winds, until the primeval seas which its alluvium had filled up came in again.

This unique pattern of separation and integration in the geographical environment of their life made it impossible

for the Hindus to take the mountains lightly and make them an extension of their ordinary habitat. Even apart from the fact that their economy was not suited to mountains, they felt that these were too superhuman and awe-inspiring to be used for workaday activities, and to convert them into pleasure resorts was, of course, out of the question. That would have been a sacrilege even from the geographical point of view to them, if it were not, as it came to be considered, one from the religious. So they made the Himalayas, and particularly the mythical Mount Sumeru, which they placed at what they regarded as the focal point of the whole range, the basis of their geocosmology.

Over and above, besides being an exalted material phenomenon, the Himalayas became for the Hindus a symbol of far deeper significance, and, therefore, inviolable. The separation and articulation between the mountain and the plain was to them the material counterpart of a similar relationship between their worldly life and religious life.

From the perception of the analogy, it was a very easy thing for the Hindus to correlate the two relationships, the first of which existed between the plain and the mountain; and the other between worldly life and spiritual life. Living their worldly life on the plains, they made the Himalayas the home of beatitude and salvation. According to their way of thinking, man ascended from the plain to fulfil Dharma—Law, by Moksha—Salvation. The two were placed in a series and could not overlap. As a consequence, the Hindus could never think of going to the Himalayas to seek relief from physical discomfort. They could go there if only they were on a religious quest, and in the way of all flesh they had to suffer on the plains.

The Vindhya mountains were not so grand. On the contrary, they were soothing in their green and dark mystery. But the Hindus could no more go to them than to the Himalayas which overwhelmed them by their

grandeur. The hills and woods of Central India remained unacceptable in a different way.

Not that the Aryan Hindu was not always conscious of the beauty of this region, and an admirer of it. I had not seen any hills, or to be exact I had no recollection of the hills I had been taken to in early childhood, when I came upon a picture of the road to Pachmarhi, a well-know hill-station in Central India. I cannot even now forget the idyllic impact it made on me. In this I was a true descendant of the old Aryan and Hindu, who loved the Vindhyas, but with a feeling very different from his adoration of the Himalayas. If the latter were divine, the Vindhyas were only too, too warmly human. The epics and classical Sanskrit poetry never omit to describe the beauty of these regions even if there is a slight excuse for it. The rushing waters of the Central Indian hills, the foaming and murmuring rapids in their gorges, the *étangs* in the woods, lakes like Pampa, are dwelt on lovingly. There is in these descriptions even a touch of the sentimentality found in Corot's landscapes of l'Isle de France. *Souvenir de Mortefontaine?* Ah no! To the Aryan it was *souvenir des fontaines vivantes.* What springs, I shall presently say.

The blue hills are not less tenderly described. The Sanskrit poet Bhavabhuti, who most probably lived in the eighth century and ranks next only to Kalidasa, wrote about a part of the Vindhya region: 'Here are the Prasravana Hills, with their soft blue made softer still by the ever-drizzling clouds, their caverns echoing the babbling Godavari, their woods a solid mass of azure, made up of tangled foliage.' Englishmen! Please recall here, too, the evocations of the same region by your Aryan, Kipling.

But, again, the ancient Hindus could not live among those hills so long as they remained loyal to their distinctive way of life. These were as unsuited to their economy as the Himalayas, and were besides the home of their traditional enemy, the hunter. But the deeper reason

was that they engendered moods to which, as the Aryan saw the matter, he had no right. Even in the literary descriptions there is a suggestion as if they were toying with forbidden pleasure. The Vindhya region softened too much. In it the Aryan girl who, if jilted, could easily be the Oenone of the Achaeans, ran the risk of becoming Tennyson's Oenone, a pinning, lovesick maiden.

A young Hindu woman of ancient times, if left widowed and childless, could in the interest of the Aryan community and without the least hesitation or shame call upon a brother-in-law or any other near relative or even a good and strong Brahmin to perform the *niyoga* on her, that is to say, to procreate a child so that an Aryan shoot might not wither in a colony which needed ever more colonists. This was perfectly natural on the plains, a hard remedy for a hard situation, as matter-of-fact as the taking of seven or eight short-lived husbands in succession by an Englishwoman in the early days of Virginia.

But in the Vindhyas a strange change, thoroughly *anarya-justa*, unworthy of an Aryan, was likely to come over Aryan girls. These maidens, who expected to be as straight, strong, and awful as Valkries, learned in the soft Vindhyas to yearn for their premarital sexual intercourse. As a Sanskrit poet made one of them say:

Yah kaumara-harah, sa eva hi vara,-
s'ta eva Chaitra-ksapa'-
S'te ch'onmilita-malati-surabhayah
praudhah kadamva'nilah;
Sa ch'aivasmi; tathapi tatra
surata-vyapara-lila-vidhau,
Reva-rodhasi, vetasi-taru-tale
chetah samutkanthate.

I give a translation which is literal, and I have also tried to put it in something like the metre of the original—Sardulavikridita. Here it is:

Stole he my maidenhead, and today's husband he!
Just the same are nights of spring;
Blossoming málati, cadámba's pollen blown
Scent the selfsame heavy breeze;
I, too, the same, same she!—Still, by Reva* narrows,
'Neath a tree in tangled cane,
Ah! on that very spot, for coitus-fantasies
Wistful, wistful grows the heart!

This just would not do for an Aryan maiden. Scholars will remind me that the old Aryan, too, was prey to lust. A timely reminder lest I forget. But his lust was the rut of animals—fleshly, natural, undisguised, unashamed, violent, with no impingement on the higher emotions. The epics, and even the religious texts from the earliest and most vigorous periods of Brahmanism, are full of instances of such fits of rut. In fact, they give such stories in scores. But these sudden and wild squalls past, these stallions became Aryan warriors and priests again, as stern as the fire or sun they worshipped, and as straight and taut as the bows they drew.

To the Aryan, it was, however, one thing to give in to nature in this straightforward, honest, and simple fashion, and quite another to rest the head on the sill of a latticed window, half-drunk, half-roused by whiffs of heavy scent from poppy, mahua, or screw-pine,† gaze at fold on fold of blue hills, moan, and dream back the sweets of lost virginity. The Aryan was entitled to rut, but not to daydream: that was completely un-Aryan.

So, they had to resist the lure of the Vindhyas, live on their bare plains, nursing the Aryan heritage and bearing their cross. After a few hundred years, even before the newness of the colonization had worn off, it became so heavy that an opaque *Weltschmerz*, a grey

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* The river whose later name is Narbada; Narmada in Sanskrit.

† *Papaver somniferum; Illipe latifolia*, in Sanskrit Madhuka; *Pandanus adoratissimus*, in Sanskrit Ketaki.

pall, blotted out the green of the earth from their eyes. It was the moral and nervous breakdown brought about by this suffering which finally shaped their philosophies, and gave to them their specific colour. Western scholars have sometimes made Buddhism or Vedanta responsible for the apparent indifference of the Hindus to the things of the world, especially for their disinclination to mental and bodily exertion, and attributed to us a world-negation which we never had. The philosophies did not make our life what it is, it was the life which made the philosophies what they are. That is the proper order of attack in correlating our philosophical systems with our outlook and behaviour.

Nothing, to my thinking, makes the movement of the Hindu mind from the bodily suffering to the pessimistic philosophies clearer than the story of Buddhism, the first philosophy of sorrow to appear in the existence of the Hindus. Siddharta, according to the well-known legend, went out on pleasure excursions, and one after another saw a man bent with age, another stricken by malady, and a third borne on a bier. These sights weighed on his mind as a terrible nightmare until, going out a fourh time, he saw a man with a shaven head, and wearing clothes dyed with red ochre, walking along calmly. He was so struck by the bearing and countenance of this man, that he went up to him and asked who and what he was. The man replied that he was a mendicant who had left the world and its ways, forsaken friends and home, and thus found deliverance. At last, Siddharta saw a way out of the fears which had haunted him in the previous weeks, and he also decided to leave the world.

Can anyone conceive of a more pitiful failure, from the moral point of view, of courage, and from the biological of vitality? Where would a man stand in regard to faith and effort once he allowed himself to be intimidated by the commonplace lot of all flesh?

However, the connexion between this failure of the Hindus and their philosophies need not be established only by interference from legend. It is laid bare in so many words in all the texts. Our metaphysical systems were not erected for their own sake, but for a practical end.

'Jagad'eva duhkha-pamka-nimagnam'-uddidhirsuh parama-karuniko munih anviksikim praninaya.

—Seeing the world sunk in the mire of sorrow, the most compassionate sage composed his philosophy in order to rescue it.' So declared a commentator on the Vaiseshik or atomic system of Hindu philosophy.

Even more emphatic and direct is the declaration of Samkhya, which to my thinking is the most typical system of Hindu philosophy. The very first couplet of the earliest extant text of this school says that philosophical inquiry arises from the impact of threefold sorrow, which prompts the effort to discover the means of getting rid of it. Equally unambiguous is the later aphorism: Now, in putting an end to three kinds of sorrow lies the goal of human effort. The rejection of the intellectual motivation could not be more uncompromising.

After making sorrow and suffering their starting point, the philosophies go on to define these, and in doing so reveal the connexion I have in mind even more clearly. The idea of universal and inescapable suffering does not come from moral or spiritual experience, from any feeling of being abandoned by God, or from the spectacle of evil. No Hindu thinker would have understood the agony of St Augustine or, for that matter, even of Schopenhauer, which makes me offer the incidental remark that if the latter had any conception of Hindu philosophy it was a singularly misconceived notion. The Hindu never represented human suffering as anything but the ills flesh is heir to. Even Hindu salvation, which is release from sorrow, is reduced to terms of the flesh. That partly explains the curious emphasis which Hindu

spiritual discipline places on states of the body, metabolism, and psychoses.

According to Hindu philosophy suffering is of three kinds: that which proceeds from the 'self'; that which comes from external sources, things or other living creatures; and that which is inflicted by supernatural agencies and acts of God. It should be noted that the classification is only by the sources of suffering, and not by its nature, which is *one*—suffering of the body, with the mind thrown in as the agent of consciousness. All the systems agree over this, and I give by way of illustration the summing-up of a well-known commentator on Samkhya.

Suffering of the first kind, proceeding from the self, is again of two sorts—bodily and mental, the first originating in the disturbances of wind, bile, and phlegm; and the second from the emotions, e.g. lust, anger, greed, delusion, fear, envy, or sadness. Suffering from these causes occurs within the personality, and therefore these are called sufferings due to the *self*.

Suffering from external sources is also of two kinds: that due to other living creatures or to inanimate things; and that which is caused by supernatural agencies. In order to leave no room for doubt as to the first external source, the following are specifically mentioned: thieves, enemies, lions, tigers, buffaloes, snakes, mosquitoes, scorpions, crocodiles, trees, and stones. In the second external source are placed spirits like *yakshas*, *rakshasas*, *vinayakas*, and planets, among the troubles inflicted by them are storms, rain, hail, heat, and cold.

I am going into all these details to show that Hindu philosophy leaves no room for doubt as to what it regards as human suffering, and from what it seeks to deliver mankind. All of it comes from checks inflicted on lust of the flesh, lust of the eye, and pride of life. To Hindu philosophy, which seeks to turn the tables on the order of nature in revenge for these attacks, these forms of suffering are not, to use a musical term,

the accidentals of life, but its main key. That outlook is possible only among those who have been beaten by nature and broken in spirit. All of it boils down to one simple fact: collapse of courage and vitality. There is no hint anywhere that anything is happening in the moral or spiritual sphere. All the suffering is placed in the secular order: in one word, in the torturous Indo-Gangetic plain.

But once it is admitted that Hindu philosophy is a philosophy of failure on the bodily plane, it must also be acknowledged that it has given to that failure a grandeur of expression which no mere failure could ever hope to have. There are few systems of philosophy and religion known to me which make the proclamation of universal and inescapable sorrow so resonant. Compared with it, *vanitas vanitatum, omnia vanitas* is a trifle didactic, despite the ring; and Job's lament is personal, in spite of the passion which makes it infinitely greater art than any conscious art. In these Hebrew texts sorrow remains on the earth, but in Hindu philosophy man's suffering, arising not from his higher nature but only from his body, envelopes the whole cosmos. It is as if the dust of the Gangetic plain was rising to permeate the nebulae. Bodily suffering felt with this intensity naturally generated a passion commensurate with it.

It seems to me that the Western interpreters of Hindu philosophy, and more so their Indian imitators, have committed a great mistake and done harm by intellectualizing it too much. Much of the modern writing on the subject is just dry as dust, choking, and soul-stripped logic-chopping, which belabours the mind until it feels sick of Hindu philosophy.

To me, on the contrary, it gives a different feel, which I shall try to communicate with the help of an image. It seems to me that the authors of the various systems of Hindu philosophy are captains of ships passing through a storm. All of them evoke in my mind the figure of Captain MacWhirr in Conrad's story, *Typhoon*. There

is no contradiction between this simile and the relentless logic of the Hindu metaphysical constructions. Can the captain of a ship passing through a cyclone afford to be illogical? Please remember that Captain MacWhirr walked into his chart-room and consulted his barometers, and also his remark about the mate who had become hysterical: 'Don't listen to him. He is not on duty.' The philosophical systems lose none of their passional character by being drily argumentative in form. Perhaps this is best seen in the Nyaya system, a system of logic usually ridiculed even by the Hindus for its quibbles, but which basically remains passional, and rides on the current of Hindu sorrow.

A little thinking will show why the passion had to come. The suffering of the Hindus in everyday life was so drab and even sordid, and again it was so continuous and irritating that no man, if he knew he was condemned to live with it for ever, could hope to save himself from utter degradation except by raising the suffering to a level at which it could be borne without shame, and on which it would not be so cowardly, squalid, and repulsive as it was in life.

It was the perpetual sight of an oozing of uncleanliness into the consciousness, taken with the visible fact of the proneness of all things to decompose in a tropical country, that created the characteristic Hindu concept of *Tamas*, as the lowest of the *gunas* or attributes. The word *tamas* literally means darkness, but in Hindu thought and feeling it stands really for a very comprehensive term for all kinds of squalor—material, biological, intellectual, moral, and spiritual. Suffering in *tamas* was the Hindu hubris.

Yet the Hindu idealists saw that it was to this that their people were being driven by the relentless environment. They did not identify the power behind the degradation as Nature herself as she was in their country, but even without discovering the cause they were sufficiently frightened by the effect, and realizing that total

escape from physical and mental suffering was impossible, tried at least to redeem it—to take it from its Indian inferno to a Hindu purgatory, where it could be chastened. They succeeded in that.

But the purgatory was also terrible. Dante's is an idyll in comparison. The ways of deliverance recommended by the philosophers were more difficult to tread than even the *via dolorosa* of worldly existence, from which they sought to divert men. The tragedy of all the systems of Hindu philosophy is that they confront man with only one choice: Remain corruptible and corrupt flesh, or become incorruptible and incorrupt stone. The alternatives presented were both cruel, but in a country which was excruciatingly cruel, could there be any kind of life which was not so? The only improvement that could be brought about was that which lay between the cruelty of degradation, and the cruelty of ennoblement.

Thus there is nothing to be surprised at if Samkhya, which (let me repeat) is in my view the most typical of Hindu philosophies, is also the most cruel in the presentation of the alternatives. There is no end to the sorrow of hunger, it declares, for it is ever-recurring; there is no respite from bereavement, because after the death of one son another might die; does it appear to you that death will release you from sorrow?—no, for you will be reborn and come again into its grindmill; there is no hope in that salvation which is identified with absorption in the Absolute Brahma—none at all, because a drowned man may rise again. Where then is the end of suffering? The answer of Samkhya is awful, when taken seriously. It lies in the total severance of the bond between Purusha and Prakriti—two highly technical terms which have been elaborately explained, but which in sum are fairly simple notions. Prakriti is all that a man can understand, feel, yearn for, and even be: Purusha is an Absolute which for all human purposes is annihilation, Nirvana or extinction. Even the Nyaya

system defines salvation in such terms. It is, according to Nyaya, the sleep of the dreamless man who never wakes up. What happiness!

Of all the Hindu philosophies it was Vedanta alone which did not face man with a double tragedy. It denied the reality of worldly joys but put another kind of joy before men. Salvation, it said, was to be found by regarding the manifested and changeful world, which was subject to destruction, only as *Maya* or illusion, and trying to be united in spirit with the unchanging Absolute Soul, which was infinite and eternal. In the union was eternal and indestructible joy.

Even such a promise of joy could not come from an Aryan of the Gangetic plain. He was too exhausted. So the Vedanta philosophy in its most typical form, which offered some kind of joy and contained a certain amount of positivism, had to come from a colonial Aryan of the South, Samkara. It was as if an Australian were to offer a revivification and re-interpretation of the English spirit to an England which was passing from her present silver age to a state of ossification in culture. It had passed beyond the mental resources and capacity of the Aryavarta to formulate and develop even the most exiguous of optimistic philosophies.

And exiguous Vedantic optimism was. The system did indeed offer joy in the Absolute Being, but it could not define that Being in any terms which were comprehensible to men who knew life as lived. Not only Samkara, but all the revealed scriptures on whose interpretation by himself he based the authority of his personal philosophy, failed to define the Universal Soul as anything but a negation of all that was accessible to the senses, to thought, and to feelings even. '*Neti, Neti*', 'Not that, not that'—was all that they could say about It. So, by a devious way, even Vedanta came back to the negation of Samkhya, with only an exalted autohypnosis induced by continuous suggestion.

No wonder then that the Vedantist who regarded the world as an illusion was himself held up to ridicule in Hindu society as an illusionist. To ordinary Hindus he and his fellow-philosophers appeared like men who were devoid of common sense, if not even sense. The philosophers were not credited even with being able to speak grammatical Sanskrit. The idea that the Hindus had great love and reverence for philosophy and respect for philosophers is a figment of the European mind. What we respect are the Sadhus, possessors of occult power, not philosophers who professed to possess only knowledge, and that useless in our eyes.

Thus rejecting their own philosophies for two reasons —the intrinsic negation and the queerness of the philosophers, the Hindus in their suffering remained as unsupported in spirit as they were in the body. They lived on in pain, but they never discovered that it sprang from their inability to accept their new home and their nostalgia for the old but forgotten home.

Chapter 8

AULD LANG SYNE

THIS, however, could not be the end of the matter with them. No one can live with a continual sense of pain and void. So unphilosophical Hindus, too, hit upon certain ways of dealing with their suffering, though without conscious reasoning. No greater nonsense has ever been talked than that about the profundity of Hindu thought. There is no such thing as thinking properly so called among the Hindus, for it is a faculty of the mind developed only in Greece, and exercised only by the heirs of the Greeks. A very large part of what is called Hindu thinking is woolly speculation or just mush.

The real strength of the Hindu mind lies in its intuitive exultations, and also in its empiric patterns of action. So, the Hindu's reaction to his sorrows and sufferings, which were very concrete, was equally concrete. It took three very simple and tangible forms. First of all, without understanding his undetected nostalgia, he clung with desperate tenacity to certain things which belonged to his pre-Indian existence. Secondly, without realizing that it was his new tropical environment which was creating his suffering, he defied that environment with a fantastic bravado. Lastly, unable to endure the torture of his senses and their steady enfeeblement, he took to a course of hypertrophied and even outré sensual enjoyment as an anodyne.

In this chapter I shall describe the clinging to the symbols of his pre-Indian existence—of Auld Lang Syne —and devote the next two chapters to the defiance and the anodyne.

Throughout their existence in India the Aryan Hindus have never wavered in their loyalty and adherence to *four* things. In fact, they have worshipped all four in different ways, and these loyalties are basic to their way of life. The things in question are the Vedas, fair complexion, the rivers, and the cattle. In spite of their anti-Hindu chatter, which, incidentally, is vocal only when it is not risky, even the Anglicized Hindus are as respectful of these four as any conservative Hindu could be. They might exude radicalism or even communism through the pores, still, when these call, the great majority fall in, and the rest come to heel.

For instance, reinforced concrete, which may be described as the greatest, if not the only, achievement of the present political regime, has to be further reinforced with Vedic authority, and Vedic rites form part of the official opening ceremonies of the great material projects. Vedic fire-sacrifices have been performed even in the Presidential mansion, and wherever they are performed they are well and impressively attended, at times by

very high dignitaries, in whom one would hardly assume a belief in magic.

The partiality for fair complexion and its complement —dislike for the dark-skinned, especially dark women —is certainly stronger in the Anglicized ruling class than in the rest of the population. In the first place, fairness materially helps them to pass off as Sahibs and Memsahibs. Secondly, through careful selection, these people have become as a class fair by Indian standards, and they do not marry, indeed they cannot afford to marry, below the darkest shade found in the colour-card of the class. They can also obtain fair brides more easily than others. In Hindu society, for a long time, families with wealth and position have had the refusal of the fair girls in the marriage market.

As to the nationalist politicians of the Congress Party, many of whom are now ministers, they did not have much choice when they themselves married, because they were then regarded as young men without prospects. But now that they have gained power and wealth, they are showing themselves in no way less fastidious in selecting their daughters-in-law than any Raja; and, personally, those of them who care for such things look for fair mistresses, which is enabling a number of lower middle-class families which possess 'colour' to have a second source of livelihood.

The river cult, too, has its adherents among the ruling class. Ministers and officials, including those of the highest ranks, attend the periodic bathing festivals, especially those at Allahabad and Hardwar. At the great gathering for the Kumbha Mela at Allahabad in 1954, among other personages, both the President and the Prime Minister of India were present, and the police had to be diverted from their proper duty of regulating the crowds to look after their security and comfort. As a result, there was a stampede and a terrible disaster, in which hundreds lost their lives. Yet none of these men who join the popular rush either from superstition or from motives of politi-

cal expediency have any notion what the cult really is. The majority do not have even a feeling for water or rivers.*

It is the same with the question of superfluous and unfed cattle. Though their Western economic advisers are always pointing out the economic folly of the Hindu prejudice against slaughtering cattle, the ruling class dare not say a word of disapproval, far less act. On the contrary, many provincial governments, including even that of the Punjab where Hinduism has always been very rudimentary and Laodician, are passing ever more stringent laws to control and prevent the slaughter of cattle. In the legislatures and municipalities there is frequent criticism of the building or even maintenance of slaughterhouses in the big cities. To this the official spokesmen give very half-hearted and apologetic replies. I am almost convinced that at no very distant future there will be enforced in northern India, perhaps also in the south, something like a prohibition of meat and fish eating. I often see posters urging people to give up meat eating.

I shall give one particularly significant instance of the timidity and opportunism of the ruling class in connexion with this question. Some months before the general elections of 1962 in India, I noticed posters appearing in Delhi with this extraordinary accusation: 'The renegade Congress Government is assassinating cows!' I could not even make a distant guess as to the reason for this absurd charge. But afterwards I learned that it referred to the serving of beef in the Ashoka Hotel of Delhi, which is owned by the Indian Government and is meant for foreign tourists. Obviously, the Hindu Rightists were looking for their stick. I thought, however, that at least this stick would be treated with the contempt it deserved. But no, that is not the way of our ruling class.

Very soon I read in the newspapers that the management of the hotel had stopped serving beef in its dining

* For Nehru's loyalty to the cult of rivers, see Appendix II to Chapter 14.

rooms. The poster was an election manœuvre, so the withdrawal had also to come as a counter-manœuvre. It would have been unreasonable to sacrifice votes for a mere fad like rationalism. Even so, at the time of the elections, some posters were displayed which showed Congress politicians dragging cows to the slaughter-house, and these had to be removed and confiscated as illegal by the Delhi Administration.

I give these facts just to illustrate that in respect of the four Hindu loyalties I have referred to there is really no difference between the masses and the Anglicized ruling class, except perhaps this—that the masses are always sincere, and the rulers most often the opposite. Though the Hindus have no real understanding of these loyalties of theirs, even in their blind adherence they are more respectable than the rulers who are always talking of destroying Hinduism and always retreating before it. And the loyalties, even in their unanalysed state, are impressive. Respect for the Vedas is as imposing as the fossil skeleton of a great dinosaur; the Hindu colour prejudice is a bizarre paradox, but it cannot be contemptible because of its very perverse cruelty; the other two loyalties are in their original inspiration very touching and beautiful.

Let me, however, consider the loyalties one by one, beginning, as is proper, with the Vedas, by which in this context I mean only the four Samhitas, namely, the Rigveda, Samaveda, Yajurveda, and Atharvaveda, and not the whole Vedic canon. I know of no sacred books or scriptures which have the same prestige as among the Hindus these books, especially the Rigveda, had and still have. To me their position seems to be unparalleled elsewhere.

What about the Bible and the Quran?—you will ask. I have taken that into consideration and would nevertheless say that the Vedas present an exceptional phenomenon. Their prestige is not accounted for either by their contents or by the use that has been made of them. The Judaic, Christian, and Islamic books are revealed

scriptures of the type made familiar by these historic religions, but the Vedas are, if I might extend the word used for the religion of the Hindus for their basic texts as well, 'natural' scriptures. They are not the word of any God or gods, but mostly words addressed to gods. Perhaps I could best bring home their true character by first setting down what the Vedas *are not*, and then what they *are*.

They are most emphatically not the source of dogma or doctrine for the Hindus. Even when in some cases the tenets of later Hinduism may be said to have evolved from the wholly unsystematic Vedic beliefs, the establishment of any connexion is not necessary for the authority of those doctrines. Many of the beliefs now looked upon as basic to Hinduism are not even adumbrated in the Vedas.

The Vedic pantheon is not the classical Hindu pantheon, especially in spirit and partly also in form, and even in the Rigveda the gods already exhibit stratifications.

Thirdly, the Vedas have never been read as devotional books for their contents, and not even as literature. They have never been translated, though their language became wholly obsolete. For their devotional reading the Hindus chose later books, and these are read even now—not the Vedas.

Moreover, the text of the Vedas was never very easy to obtain in manuscript, and ancient manuscripts are non-existent. In some parts of India the Vedas were not studied or even known. Even up to British times Bengal was a centre of Sanskrit learning, but Vedic studies did not form part of it.

The only part of the Vedic religion which survives in India is some of the liturgy and ritual, belonging to the *Karma-Kanda*, or the chapter of 'works', which were specially denounced by the Hindu devotional schools and the Vedanta school of philosophy. But these also have remained only mechanically alive. They are performed,

but there is no consciousness of their doctrinal significance, and no understanding even of the words as such.

I might illustrate this by referring to the most important of the liturgical survivals—the marriage and the funeral service. The marriage service is very noble and touching, but its words have now become mere spells, and dead spells at that. So, when the reformed Hindus of Bengal, following the Protestant example, translated it into Bengali for their own use, one of the finest utterances in it—the sentence, 'May that heart of thine be also mine, and may this heart of mine be thine'—became the particular object of flippant jokes among the orthodox. The oblations, on their part, are still offered to the departed ancestors in an unmodified Vedic manner, but the ceremony bears no relation whatever to the later and present-day beliefs of the Hindus about after-life. The Vedic concept about the dead and the belief in Karma and rebirth are utterly irreconcilable, and the contradiction is not perceived only because nobody understands the Vedic rite.

Last of all, the modern Hindu interest in the Vedas is wholly artificial, and is a creation of Western scholarship. It is an academic interest, but not competent academic interest, for most of the Indian scholars and historians who deal with the Vedic age cannot read Vedic Sanskrit, and are wholly dependent on Western translations and exegesis.

This is a very conservative estimate of what the Vedas *are not* among present-day Hindus. Without any exaggeration I could have said that the Vedas are unmistakable museum-pieces, just as the skeletons of the Hasti Ganesa, the Indian prehistoric elephant, also are. But the whole aspect changes as soon as they are considered as symbols, sacred idols, and even fetishes in a national myth, instead of as living scriptures. Then the Vedas are seen to be living, powerful, and capable of enforcing almost abject awe from the Hindus even today. The Vedas *are* something from this point of view, and I shall try to describe what that 'something' is.

From the very first the acceptance of the authority and suprahuman origin of the Vedas was made the test of a Hindu. He was entitled to disbelieve in God, and be an uncompromising atheist in the Western sense. He was entitled to hold any view on spiritual matters. He had a wide choice of religious practices. Nobody was likely to hold an inquisition into any of these things. But so long as he remained a Hindu there was one thing he could never do, and that was to question the authority of the Vedas. He could not, even by implication, cast any reflexion on them.

The Sanskrit word for an atheist is *nastika*, which really means 'nihilist', and the nihilist is the man who does not bow down before the Vedas. To the Hindus of ancient times the Buddhists and Jainas were atheists in this sense, and so were also the hedonistic philosophers known as the Charvakah, or men of pleasant speech. They were in their different ways *nastikah*, to which was added the explanatory adjective *Veda-nindakah*, the detractors of the Vedas. They were outside the Hindu pale, and there is a story in a Sanskrit novel of a man who was driven by poverty to enter a Jaina monastery, but who was bitterly regretting the weakness which was forcing him to listen to the anti-Vedic blasphemies of the monks of this sect.

Even in Bengal, where there was no first-hand knowledge of the Vedas, the Vedic myth was as powerful as it could be anywhere else, and the Vedic orthodoxy unshaken. One article of this orthodoxy was that a Sudra could neither read nor even hear the Vedas. If he did, his tongue was to be cut off or molten lead poured into his ears. Now, I am technically a Sudra, and one day, when I was a schoolboy, out of sheer mischief I recited the famous *gayatri* before the officiating priest of our family temple. He could not, of course, even scold a son of the family which employed him, but I shall not forget the look of injury that came into his eyes and the re-

proachful tone in which he said: 'Do you think you did well or a right thing in reciting that?'

An acquaintance of ours, of my father's generation, had become a Brahmo, that is to say, a member of the new monotheistic sect, and he was taken to task for this. When he said that he could not believe in many gods and in idol worship, the pundit who was hauling him over the coals asked whether he was decent enough at least to believe in the Vedas. When he again replied 'No', the Brahmin lost his temper and flourishing his thumbs shouted, 'What the . . . do you then believe in?'

To the Hindu the Vedas always were and even now are the *fons et origo* of his entire way of life. Theoretically, at least, everything in it must be derived from them, and even when many things he does or believes in cannot be connected with any Vedic text, he will say that these are implicit in the Vedas. He would add that when properly interpreted the Vedas were bound to disclose them.

During the last one hundred years or so this belief that the Vedas contain everything has been carried to the length of absurdity in the face of the challenge of European science. I have heard scholars who are otherwise quite respectable, say that evidence for the existence, not only of firearms, but even of aeroplanes in ancient India is to be found in the Vedas. This is a new aspect of the worship of the Vedas.

Another new aspect is the pseudo-aesthetic, and the fashion in this was set by Tagore himself. I have never been able to suppress my regret over this insincere pose in so great a man. When he established an agricultural college and farm in his university, there were elaborate stage effects in the way of Vedic rituals: worship of the bullocks, drawing of the plough and turning of the furrow to the accompaniment of Vedic spells, and also transport of saplings in a palanquin. When I heard of this ridiculous mummery I commented: Tagore either believes in

homoeopathic magic, or he is posing—both are equally unpleasant.

The recent affectation of Vedic rituals in opening technological creations is really a legacy of Tagore. But that affiliation only hides the real force behind the latest exhibition of the loyalty to the Vedas. It is not the modern Indian counterpart of the Western aestheticism which decorates a drawing room with religious objects. The new Hindu practice is only a slightly modernized version of the old loyalty to the Vedas.

This prestige, which has nothing to do with the contents of the Vedas and is purely mythical, cannot be explained on any rational ground except one: that they were the original scriptures of the Aryan way of life and were brought into India as such, and since the Aryans were determined to continue their old life in the country they had moved into, these became the main pillar of the *mos majorum*. I do not deny that in their existing form the Vedas may have been partly recast and rewritten in India, but there can be no doubt that substantially they come down from the pre-Indian existence of the Aryans, and they had become a symbol of their way of life even then. I do not like to be dogmatic on this point, but it seems to me that the Vedic pantheon as it appears in the Rigveda had already taken shape by the fourteenth century before Christ, when the Aryans were in Mesopotamia.

One aspect of the Vedic faith can be said to be decisive for this conclusion. It is the dogma that the Vedas are eternal and existed since the beginning of time, taken with the connected belief that they were saved from the Deluge by being carried on a leaf by the first incarnation of Vishnu, the preserving god. It is quite improbable that the Aryans could have evolved the concept of the Deluge in India. To cut the matter short, whether the Vedas were understood or not, or whether their later religious beliefs and practices were different from the Vedic, were immaterial questions for the Hindus. They were the

books by which they were to be recognized as a colonial people in India, and not as its 'natives'.*

I have already remarked that the Hindu's infatuation with fair complexion and prejudice against a dark skin constitute a bizarre and cruel paradox. But those who know how all European peoples have felt about 'colour', and how they have behaved towards dark-skinned races, should not be surprised by the Hindu attitude. They would only wonder why it has not softened with time, as the complexion of the Hindus has become darker and darker. Actually, that very tendency has hardened the Hindu colour-prejudice, and it is easy to see why this should have happened.

It is the familiar story of men being disposed to be generous when they have enough, and to be kind when they are without fear. When the Aryans in India were fair as a community and were not very seriously threatened in regard to complexion either by the climate or miscegenation, they could afford to operate their colour-bar which must have been in existence ever since they arrived in India, with comparative mildness. But as the danger grew, so did the intolerance, until it inhibited both aesthetic sensibility and even compassion.

I might add here that to my thinking the light- to dark-brown complexion of the people of the Indo-Gangetic plain is due to the climate rather than to intermixture with the true Darks of the country. I have been recently taking very careful note of the deterioration of the complexion of Americans and Europeans in India, and seeing

* The strange paradox that the Vedic hymns are prayers, invocations or praise from human beings and are yet regarded as 'non-human'—apaurusheya in Sanskrit—has a bearing on my argument. It implies a total break in race-memory after the migration to India which made the Indo-Aryans transfer all their pre-Indian experiences to a divine phase or order, one important example being the transformation of the conflict between the Iranians and the Aryans who moved into India as a result of their defeat, into a war between the Devas (gods) and Asuras (titans).

what can happen even in five years I do not find it difficult to believe that the sun and the wind playing on the fair complexion of the Aryans over centuries could have brought about the embrowning that we see today. I have also lost faith in the two dogmas which in my young days I learned from the older school of biologists and physical anthropologists: that acquired characters are not inherited, and that the shape of the skull, character of the hair, and pigment of the sking are unchangeable genetic traits. Indeed, at present I very much doubt whether in northern India any very large-scale miscegenation between the Aryans and the Darks took place.

But whatever the reason might be, the darkening did appear, and as it made more and more headway, the Aryan-Hindu became aware of the problem of maintaining his original complexion. He took to selective breeding, and did not care much about the inhumanity of his eugenics. One of the first results of the application of the eugenics of complexion was a more or less complete insensibility to the physical beauty of a dark person, which, as I have emphasized in an earlier chapter, the ancient Hindu did not show. But modern Hindus have become incapable of seeing any beauty in a dark woman. A girl might look astonishingly lovely in a photograph, but even her father, if she was dark, would only say that though his daughter was no beauty she had good features.

It would be dishonest of me to suppress the fact that in spite of being dark myself, I am also subject to this bias, though in a negative and passive manner. One evening I was at a party given by a European friend of mine, and my niece was with me. She was willowy in figure and rather Florentine in the face, but she was also dark. While I was talking to a French friend, there was some occasion to look towards her and say that she was my niece. Immediately the friend remarked, "I was also wondering who that beautiful girl could be.' My unconscious reaction to that observation was surprise, for we

had never thought of her as a beauty, though at the time we were taken up with the question of her marriage.

But the modern Hindu aversion to dark persons is not always passively felt, it can be positive and vocally unpleasant. Especially, to dark young girls the Hindus can be not only heartless, but assertively cruel, and they do not perceive the cruelty only because all of them, including the insulted ones, are so used to it. The dark girls have to hear uncomplimentary remarks made about them to their face by acquaintances and relatives, and they have also to bear ceaseless reproaches from their mothers. They themselves take up an attitude of guilt, as if they had committed a deliberate offence.

Till recently they were continually reminded that they were unsaleable goods in the marriage-market, a problem and a burden for their parents. If the reproaches are not as loud today as they used to be, that is only because the parents no longer care very much whether the daughters are married or not, and in many cases prefer them to be working girls so that there might be extra money in the family. So the pain of spinsterhood has somewhat mitigated the suffering from being dark.

In this book I shall not go into the details of the Hindu preference for a fair complexion, and the Hindu prejudice against a dark skin. Those who want more information might refer to my autobiography, in which a few pages (pp. 123-9) are devoted to the subject. But I might as well draw attention to the attitude of Indians today to the Negroes, a few of whom are in the country. Most Hindus, especially women, have a feeling of physical repulsion from them which nothing can conquer. It is sometimes seen that a European or American girl has married a Negro, but it is impossible to conceive even the possibility of a Hindu girl doing so.

It is easy to explain why the Hindu is so colour-conscious. In order to save myself the trouble of re-formulating my view of the matter I shall quote what I said about it

in my autobiography. I could not put it more clearly or emphatically. Here is the passage:

This adoration of colour in the Hindu has a profound historical basis. The Hindu civilization was created by a people who were acutely conscious of their fair complexion in contrast to the dark skin of the autochthons, and their greatest preoccupation was how to maintain the pristine purity of the blood-stream which carried this colour. *Varna* or colour was the central principle round which Hindu society organized itself, and the orthodox Hindu scriptures know of no greater crime than miscegenation, or, as they call it, *Varna-samkara*, the mixing of colour.

This faith in the sanctity of *Varna*, colour or caste, endures and abides in Hindu society, and the fact—from the point of view of doctrine, the adventitious fact—that the inevitable intermixture with the indigenous element has made many Hindus dark-skinned, makes no difference to the hold and fascination of the ideal of colour.

That is why the Hindus are so infuriated by the colour-bar, and by the colour-prejudice among peoples of European origins. These are a double insult to them. In a general way they feel, of course, that discrimination based on the colour of the skin is an offence against humanity and justice. But what they resent even more is that they are mistaken for coloured persons. There is nothing which makes them so angry as to be taken for a Negro.

What is wrong in the Hindu objection to the Western colour-bar is the self-deception, the suppression of the fact that when he thinks he is standing for humanity he is standing for egoism. On the other hand, I would not admit that any Occidental has the right to criticize us for hypocrisy. Colour-prejudice is the common—and should I also say?—the original sin of all the peoples of European origins. The Hindus only systematized and practised it *first*, as *the first* people of European origins confronted with the threat to a fair complexion from the dark.

The third loyalty to Auld Lang Syne was embodied in river-worship. I referred to it incidentally in my book on England when speaking about the English rivers. 'The cult of the rivers', I said, 'is much older in our country than many other cults supposed to be very ancient. The big rivers are sacred all over the country, and they were sacred even before the great gods migrated to their banks. As a matter of fact, they migrated to take advantage of a pre-existing holiness.' No one seems to remember in these days that the word *tirtha*, which in the Sanskritic languages of the country now means 'a place of a pilgrimage', originally denoted only 'a bathing place on a river bank' in Sanskrit.

On account of this cult almost every notable river in India, wherever it was—east, west, north, or south, became holy. It can indeed be said that along with the gods the rivers also are in the Hindu pantheon, and they all have names which are astonishingly beautiful even as sound. It was as if in naming them the Aryan had poured out a heartful of love into each word. This extraordinary devotion has never been explained fully. The modern educated Hindu puts forward the shallow and commonplace rationalistic hypothesis that in a hot country water is both a necessity and a pleasure, and therefore all watercourses have been given a sacred status. This is a typical instance of the Hindu's failure to make any legitimate use of European rationalism. It has never induced him to become rational in his convictions and behaviour, but it has none the less given him an extra readiness to put forward utterly absurd rationalistic excuses for his irrational urges and taboos.

Yet the clue to the worship of rivers seems obvious enough. The Aryans in their original home, where they had already evolved into a self-conscious human group, had broad rivers—the Danube, Dnieper, Don, or Volga, and they could not feel happy without such rivers. So, after coming to western Asia, they settled between the

Euphrates and the Tigris. But as I have said, they could not live or survive there.

Then came an interlude, a rather long one, of a riverless existence for a river-loving people. The streams of Persia did not answer their conception of rivers. The Indus and the rest in India did, and their joy at seeing them must have been all the greater for the deprivation. If this is considered too far fetched, I hope I shall be permitted to recall that our age has swallowed the 'subconscious' with even less criticism than what a crocodile brings to bear on a hooked bait of calf or goat.

Long before I had any inkling of this idea of mine, I was struck by the similarity between the Danube in its lower reaches and some of our rivers, after seeing a picture of the former. It was during the Balkan War of 1912-13* that an issue of *The Illustrated London News* carried a picture of some Austrian gunboats near Belgrade. The appearance of the river in it impressed me so much that I forgot its real subject. No picture of any European river I had seen before, such as the Thames, Dee, Avon, or the Rhine near Drachenfels, had prepared me for the aspect of that stretch of the Danube, as it looked in the illustration. 'Why,' I said to myself, 'it looks like the Brahmaputra in our district.' This spontaneous association was significant, though at the time I had no perception of the significance.

On arriving in India the Aryans saw something which was the converse of my experience. After they had reached the bank of the Indus, I should think, there was a scene like the one which the Ten Thousand created when, at the end of their retreat, they saw the Euxine. As Xenophon relates, he was with the rearguard and suddenly he and his companions heard a great shout from the front ranks which had gone up to a summit. They thought at first that the van was being attacked by some

* I give the date from memory (without verification), but I feel sure that I saw the illustration before the outbreak of the first World War.

enemy, and as more and more men reached the top the shouts increased in volume. Xenophon mounted his horse, marshalled the cavalry, and galloped up to give help. It was not long, however, before he could make out that the cry really was—'Thalatta, Thalatta! The Sea, the Sea!' Deliverance had at last come to the Ten Thousand. All the men, soldiers and generals, embraced one another, and on a sudden impulse they brought stones and erected a great mound, which they decorated with the hacked shields of their enemies.

Such a shout must have been heard by the main body of the Aryans when their advance guard reached the Indus. 'Sindhu, Sindhu, Sindhu!' they must have shouted at the joy they felt on seeing a river which seemed to be the real image of the great rivers of their old traditions. I wish I could go and and scour the banks of the Indus to discover if they also erected a mound.

There was even greater happiness in store. It is nowhere stated in Aryan mythology that their gods had held out any hopes of a Promised Land to them. Yet the People of the Gods had come to it. Behind the Indus there were more rivers, and they crossed all of them one after another, until they came to think of their new home as a land of seven rivers. Still they could not rest. They heard vague reports—not definite ones like Alexander's on the Beas—that there were other and bigger rivers to the east, and also ultimated land. So they began to move out in large numbers, tribe by tribe or clan by clan, the men in their horse-drawn chariots, and the women, children, and goods in mule- or bullock-carts.

A very large band was on the move somewhere near modern Kurukshetra, and it had sent out a reconnaisance party of three chariots, with three dashing *comites* and their charioteers. They were well to the front, by some lengths, before the main body and were leaving it far behind, for they were racing as if, instead of being on rough tracks, they were in a hippodrome. Their horses were splendid: the one to the right a jibbing and rearing

black stallion; in the middle a chestnut gelding; and to the left a beautiful white mare, with a long and waving, silky tail. They had named their horses by their colours—Krishna (Black), Syava (Chestnut), and Sveta (White).

The owner of Krishna was a young giant bursting with swagger. He stood up in his chariot, shot an arrow, and said to his charioteer: 'Sarathi, he is not going fast enough. Let him run with the arrows.' At this all the young men and their charioteers bursts into a joyful shout, and flicked their horses to a wilder gallop. The master of the black horse went on twanging his bow and shooting arrows all the time. After a while the chestnut gained on the others, and its owner clapped his hands and cried, 'Bravo, Syava! Well done! You have beaten them all. Best of all, you have beaten Krishna and the braggart behind him.'

'Don't crow after winning for a minute by only a neck,' yelled the insulted young man furiously.

'Why not? Do you think you only may crow, as you always try to? Look at my Syava! How he is flying his pennons of victory from forelock to tail! Is he not looking like leaping flames?'

'He may', replied the other. After all he knew his horse-flesh, but he would not go without his fling either. So he added: 'Indeed he is, but only from forelock to tail, not down to the belly. What is a horse without his beauty underneath, his scrotum? Your Syava is only an *amuskha-vaji* (gelding). But look at Krishna and what he has got. Oh, so big and tight, and yet, see, how it is throbbing! What's the good of sitting behind a horse if you don't see a scrotum?'

'Look then, look well, look only at that,' laughed the owner of mare, who had come up abreast.

'You'd say that,' retorted the admirer of the scrotum, 'that fellow has got at least a pouch to look at. You've nothing. Grapes are very sour. You are so timid that you only sit behind a mare.'

'What! Is my Sveta—My fine girl! Are you less spirited and fleet than that Krishna with his scrotum? And you conceited fool! Don't you know that the vulva of a mare is ever so much more beautiful than the scrotum of a stallion? Is there anything more shapely, more fine cut? And, by Indra, how it is trembling, too! If you saw it you'd be as mad as your stallion.'

'Come, come!' persuasively shouted the owner of the gelding, who was laughing at the outbursts, 'you two are quarrelling viciously enough about a scrotum and a vulva for me to think that I am listening to a boor and a wench in a wheat field. Behave now like Aryas. All our horses are fine, and be they stallion, mare, or gelding—they are good horses. Let us sing of them, with the song our fathers have given us:

> Yoke, yoke, yoke the duns; yoke the chesnut mares;
> Prance the tawny steeds, tied to poles in pairs;
> Loud, ever more loud, they all loudly neigh,
> And the chariots roll and thunder, h e i g h!*

By the time the song was finished Krishna's master had recovered his temper, and he suggested another song. 'Now,' he cried, 'let's sing of her towards whom we are going—the ovely rose-red Usha, Eros, Aurora, Dawn. But let it be *our* song, not of the fathers.' Looking back, he snapped his fingers and said, 'The old fogeys! Now, fellows, sing—

> Immortal maiden! You who love my chaunt!
> Who is the mortal, tell me, in which haunt
> Enjoys you the man: for whom you, too, fare
> Like a red-roan, strawberry, dappled mare.
> A dancer are you, in your dazzling weave;
> As cows their udder, so your breasts you give!'†

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* A pastiche, but with phrases only from the Rigveda: Mandala V, Sukta 47, vv. 6-7.

† Rigveda: Mandala I, Sukta 30, vv. 20-21; Sukta 92, v. 4.

Thus they rolled along. But it was to be many a long day before they met their rosy dawn. Only a light pink, saffron flush lured them on, until they came to Bengal. There they faced their Usha, and saw her coming out of the east as red, as radiant, and as resplendent as they had wanted her to be. Then they cried, 'Vibhavari, Vibhavari, Vibhavari! Oh Refulgent, Refulgent, Refulgent!'

But it was no longer possible for them to stretch out their hands to her breasts. That would have been sacrilege. She was no more only Eos, but Aidos Triumphant, and seeing her the young heroes fell on their knees and worshipped as we also, who come from East Bengal, did when we saw her coming in the wake of the morning star across the broad Meghna or Brahmaputra.

But though not to Dawn, they came anon to another river, which was very dark. 'See,' they said to one another, 'it is flowing away from the Western Ocean and not towards it. We must find what it is flowing into.' They went along the river, but hearing that a much larger one lay to the east, crossed over, and after a strenuous run soon came to its bank. Of course, the river was the Ganges. They contemplated it for some time, then observed: 'The river we have left behind is its twin. So let us name that Yamuna.' They also noticed that the new river did not lie athwart their path, but along it, and they decided that they must follow it.

From that moment the Aryan spirit began to flow down that noble stream to the sea, but not to be lost to Aryavarta. It rose again from the ocean with the waters of the Ganges which had also lost themselves there, and blowing inland as clouds of the spirit with clouds of rain, it came down on their heads to renew their life. When seeing the real clouds they cried, 'Parjanya, Parjanya, Parjanya!' they felt that besides the visible clouds which were raining on their fields, there was something else softly raining within their hearts.

As in every other aspect of Hindu life, so also in river-worship there has been, with time, a progressive loss of

beauty and grandeur, and a steady gravitation towards crudity. But perhaps, compared with the degradation in certain other things, the cult of the rivers has suffered least. There still is a simple impressiveness about it, due certainly to a combination of mass and motion—the spontaneous, almost instinctive movement of very large numbers of people towards water. This rush is seen in three forms in contemporary India.

There is, first, the cyclical bathing in the Ganges or some other important river on dates fixed by celestial phenomena, either some conjunctions of the planets and stars, or eclipses, or even new and full moons. Of these some, like the Kumbha Mela to which I have referred, and Ardhodaya Yoga, are specially holy, and it is not unusual to see a million or even more people congregated on these occasions at Allahabad or Hardwar. In the Kumbha Mela of 1962 were seen at least two million bathers, and they bathed on a river front which was less than a mile. The crush can be imagined from this alone.

The railways are hard put to it to deal with the pilgrims, and very large numbers travel without tickets. All the roads and railways of India then lead to the bathing place, wherever it might be. It seems as if an invisible force, not an octopus but a gigantic cephalopod with thousands of tentacles, was dragging people to these places. The spectacle is awe-inspiriting, and the disgust which such blind obedience to superstition would otherwise have roused, is inhibited by the mere scale of the obedience. I do not think anybody who has not seen these Hindu movements will find it easy to believe that a collective idée fixe can produce a hyperkinesis of this order. The spectacle has become so familiar that the people of India no longer even try to understand it.

They take these marches to the rivers for granted as the people of Norway do that of their lemmings, and if you think over it you will see that the cause is at bottom the same. The lemming phenomenon has never been fully explained, but the most plausible theory is that the ani-

mals rush into the fiords in obedience to a migratory instinct formed when there was no North Sea, and the shortest route to the warm south was on that side. The Kumbha and other such bathings may be looked upon as a ritualized celebration of the Aryan's march to the rivers of India.

The second form of the river-worship is seen at various holy places, of which the most holy are certainly Benares and Allahabad. People go on this pilgrimage, not necessarily on any special date, but once in a life-time or more frequently according to convenience, to discharge their debt to the historic bathing places. They think that with every bathe in these places all the previous sins are washed away. The belief and in any case the impulse born of it are so deep-seated that even very modern and Anglicized persons cannot resist them.

In its third form the cult is less impressive outwardly, but certainly more touching in its intrinsic quality. Its ritual is only the daily bathe in some big river, which starts very early in the morning at the break of dawn and goes on almost till evening. It can be seen in Delhi or Calcutta, just as at Allahabad or Benares. People, both men and women, accompanied at times by children, will walk miles to go to the rivers.

I have seen this bathing at many places, and in Delhi I have been seeing it for twenty years. The 'Secular State' does not exist for these bathers. It is a pleasure to see the bathing, for it is one of the few sights which can soothe the spirit during the terrible hot season of the Gangetic plain. For a few moments, flitting though they are, the ever-present maladjustment between the Aryan and his tropical environment seems to be suspended, and one sees the rare spectacle of a happy meeting between the two.

There stands the Brahmin, bare-bodied in breast-deep water and with his hands folded, saying his *mantras* and looking with fixed eyes towards the point where the sun will rise across the water, across the broad, grey sands,

over the azure border of the distant villages. Only then does his face recover some of its original manliness, vigour, and calm. The sacred thread across his chest shows that he has more than a natural right to these waters. Of course, at present this bathing is only a habit, in which the mind of the bather is hardly engaged at its thinking and feeling level. But do we not admire statues in which the ethos of a people is given a material embodiment? Nothing prevents our having the same kind of feeling for these bathers. There are moments in which I perceive modern and living Hindus only as sculpture, and perhaps it is then that I perceive them at their best.

The women, too, take on a beauty which is nowhere described in Sanskrit literature. One of its recurring themes is the bathing of women in rivers, and in the ripples which lapped their fleshly breasts the poets always saw the kneading hands of lovers. Even chilly water of the winter could not drive away this association from their minds. But the reality was, and still is, different, in spite of the leers which, alas! are only too frequently directed towards the exposures on the women's side of the bathing ghats from the men's. This has always been condemned by the Hindu moralists and satirists as an abuse of the right to flowing water.

Intrinsically, there is nothing in the scenes themselves to evoke this prurience. To feel it, one has to carry to these places the insatiate lusts of the previous nights. On the other hand, the scenes have no resemblance whatever to the penguinism exhibited by the bathers on the beaches of the West. Besides the Hindu bathing the apparent unconcern of the Western crowds in their prudish nudity appears vulgar.

So, women in India feel no hesitation even to being completely naked in the bathing places, and even to walking in this state from one bathing place to another, though this is not very common. In Calcutta the prostitutes living in nearby quarters would come to the Hooghly (which is regarded as the Ganges by the local Hindus),

and would rise from their bathe looking, and perhaps also feeling, as if they were going to start in their profession only in the evening to follow. Had they cared to accept advance bookings then, they would certainly have secured more customers there, in their plain and single *sari*, than they would have done in the evening in their painted and over-dressed meretricity. The decorations in Ganges mud on their faces made them look almost unearthly. It was not for nothing that the Ganges was called the Redeemer of the Fallen.

Taking the bathing women in their totality, in all their classes and worldly positions which the water simply washes away, it can be said that they acquire a formidable impersonality. If the Aphrodite of Melos were put in that water, she could not be more stony than these women. No Elders would have cared to spy on these Susannahs: they would have been frozen.

I come last of all to cow-worship, which I consider as the fourth loyalty to Auld Lang Syne. This is a paradox of the Hindu system of values and behaviour which baffles all Occidentals. Of all the irrational Hindu obsessions, none appears more irrational than the fanatical and ferocious determination not to permit the destruction of superfluous and useless cattle, even when the animals cannot be properly fed or cared for. This is a negation of every principle of economy and efficiency in animal husbandry, and all the more so because in India there never is any regular allocation of land for pasture. From the moral point of view, it appears to be a very repulsive form of hypocrisy to worship cows and yet starve them. As everybody knows, the worshipped cattle are, as a rule, pitifully scraggy.

I would point out, however, that the worst underfeeding is a recent development due to pressure on land. I remember that as a boy I often put two questions to my father. I loved thatch and hated corrugated iron in roofs, and I asked why we were allowing that ugly material to replace the old. I also noticed that the cows were being

fed more and more even in villages on straw mixed with oilcake and rice gruel, and not, as before, mostly on grass. To both the questions my father gave the identical answer: 'There is not enough land even for crops.' In East Bengal, however, the pressure on land was caused more by the money-crop jute than by food-crops. For the sake of money people did not mind going slightly underfed themselves.

In cow-worship, too, one sees the operation of the cruel law of evolution of the Hindus: that trees disappear before the weeds. All big and strong things, which have life, magnanimity, and tenderness in them, cannot defy the Indian environment and go down one by one, and their place is taken by withered and dry forms of life, all the more indestructible for being so. In the end nothing is left but *fossilized* weeds, not even *simple* weeds. Therefore what we see of cow-worship today is not its living tree-like form, but its fossilized weedy survival.

Alien domination has also affiliated the Hindu worship of the cow and opposition to cow-killing with the anti-Muslim and anti-British nationalism. Already, even before the coming of the Muslims, the question of protecting cattle had entered both Hindu ethics and Hindu religion. The foreign conquests made it a part of nationalism, because both the sets of hated foreign rulers were given to killing and eating cattle. This injection of politics made the old Hindu feeling for the cow a contentless, disembodied fanaticism, more hatred of the Muslim and British cow-killer than love for the animal. No generous sentiment could remain generous and no human emotion could remain human, once it got enmeshed in Hindu xenophobia.

I shall, however, surprise my readers by saying that I am going to put in a good word for the cow-worship, though, of course, not in its contemporary, and especially Hindustani, form. When the Hindus had not lost their vitality, and when they had not exchanged true compassion for the degraded and morbid respect for animal life

which they now practise and profess, the cult of the cow did have a beauty and strength of its own.

It had a wholly different complexion in ancient times, and even preserved a good deal of that complexion down to my young days when it was not in direct touch with the Hindu nationalism and xenophobia. The care of the cow and the feeling for it originated in other and better impulses, both religious and secular. I shall give just an indication of the Hindu attitude towards cattle from the earliest ages down to the Muslim conquest, with which it wholly changed its character.

In the Vedic period we find a very great love for and prizing of cattle, together with an absorption in it, as indeed was to be expected in an agricultural and pastoral people. All the feelings are perfectly straightforward, and they are combined with every possible economic use of cattle, including, of course, their slaughter for food. Though Sanskrit did not make the word for cattle also the word for money, as was done in Latin, the phase *Godhan*, cow-wealth or cow-treasure, is often found, and the gift of cattle was always looked upon as the best gift. In epic literature the merit of giving cattle is eloquently set forth, and the inducement is also held out that those who give generously will be entertained in heaven after their death by plump-papped and fat-buttocked (*pina-payodhara* and *prithunitamvini*) celestial courtesans.

The Vedic spirit continued into the age which the epics generally reflect, along with the religious note, as well as an adumbration of the notion that to kill cows is sinful. But the old and the new attitudes are recorded without any attempt at reconciling them, and without any rejection of the one for the other. In one place, the Mahabharata mentions, without thinking it necessary to add any excuse, that a very hospitable king used to have 20,100 cattle slaughtered every day for his guests.

But another story shows that the debate had also started, and the anti-cow-slaughter opinion had made its appearance. In this story a king is entertaining a sage, and

he has ordered a cow (or bull, in Sanskrit the word used is *Go*, which can mean a bull, cow, steer, heifer, or calf) to be slaughtered, in obedience to the Vedic injunction to kill cattle for guests. Just then another sage, who is against the practice, comes in and seeing what is going to be done cries out: 'Alas for the Vedas!' meaning to say of course that very wrong things were done in the name of the Vedas.

But when this story originated the Hindu cow-killers had not been intimidated, nor had they been driven to the defensive, they could still take the offensive. So, we read that as soon as the deprecatory exclamation was uttered, another sage went into the body of the cow—as if to show that the cow herself thought it right to be slaughtered—and put this question to the objecting sage: 'How does it happen that you can be so impious as to show disrespect to the Vedas by denouncing an act which is enjoined and recommended in them?' The other sage could only reply that it was far from his intentions to traduce the Vedas; he only wanted to say that the Vedas were so difficult to understand and so easily misunderstood that if anyone wanted to justify the killing of cattle he had better do so by showing good reasons instead of only falling back on the Vedas. That at least was sensible.

Hindu sacred law also, especially as it is in the older and the more authoritative treatises, sets down both the views, without bothering about consistency. There is no doubt, however, that by the time the Dharma Sastras (books on sacred law) took their final shape the slaughter of cattle for food had ceased or virtually ceased among the Hindus. None the less, there was no revulsion from the mere idea of killing cattle, as developed later. Writing in the eighth century, Bhavabhuti could still put the following dialogue in his play *Uttara-Rama-Charita*. It is between two hermit boys, named Saudhataki and Dandayana:

S. Dandayana, what is the name of the guest who has arrived today with a big train of women?

D. Stop joking. He is no less a person than the revered Vasishtha himself, with Arundhati his wife leading the queens of King Dasaratha. So, enough of your gabble.

S. Is it Vasishtha, eh?

D. Who else?

S. I thought it was a tiger or a wolf.

D. Oh! What talk!

S. For, as soon as he came, he crunched up our poor tawny heifer.

D. It is written that meat should be given along with curds and honey. So every host offers a heifer, a big bull, or a goat to a learned Brahmin who comes as guest. This is laid down in sacred law.

Such a dialogue in modern play before a north Indian Hindu audience would have caused a riot. In this connexion I shall relate an anecdote. Some years ago, when one of my sons was at college in Delhi, his teacher of history asked him if he could get from me any authentic references to the eating of beef and killing of cattle by the Hindus in ancient times. I sent him a number of texts, including the above, and also a volume of the Rigveda itself, in the Oxford edition of Max Muller. The class in which these were read out was full of north Indian Hindus, many of whom were of the Arya Samaj, a sect which professes special loyalty to the Vedas. The scandal and shock were great, but, of course, there was nothing to do. At last an Arya Samajist boy had an idea, and he asked my son what the edition of the Rigveda he had read from was. When he heard that it was the Oxford Edition he at once said that the Mlechchhas had interpolated that passage to spite the Hindus, and that the only true text of the Vedas was to be found in Swami Dayananda's *Satyartha Prakas*. After that, of course, there could be no further argument.

But two questions remain to be answered. Why did the Hindus become disinclined to slaughter cattle in spite of the authority of the Vedas and even of the Dharma Sastras, and how did this disinclination become a compulsive religious taboo? The explanation given by modern Hindus is naive, even more naive than the reason they give for river-worship. They say that an animal which keeps us alive by giving milk has the right to demand respect for its own life. The relationship is expressed, not in terms of economics, of animal husbandry, or of the imperialism of man over the animal world, but as a matter of ethics, as if one was speaking of a man's relationship with his wet nurse.

On this supposition the buffalo is even a greater mother of the Hindus than the cow, for the supply of milk in northern India comes more from that animal than cows. But nobody worships the poor buffalo. In certain parts of India it is even sacrificed as a part of Hindu worship, as it used to be in *my* ancestral home. I am reminded by the wet-nurse argument of the essays we had to write as boys on the cow's unexampled benevolence and philanthropy in keeping young humans alive and the grown-ups sustained in the middle.

The real reason is, however, as simple and as easy to discover as that for river-worship. It is that the Aryans had not found their humped cattle in the country, but had brought them from the Middle East and soon discovered that they would not survive in India without extra care. In other words, the Zebu was as much a part of their Aryan heritage as the Vedas. It was and remains an Aryan heirloom.

I know that one argument may be advanced against this view of mine. There is a hypothesis that the modern humped cattle of India (*Bos indicus*) is descended from an extinct type of Zebu, which might be called *Bos indicus primigenius* or *antiquus*. I have not seen any fossil which can bear out this theory, and though I have not been able as yet to carry out a thorough inquiry on this

point, I would say that even on *a priori* grounds of a zoo-geographical order this is highly improbable. I set forth the known and indisputable facts in brief.

First, the Indian wild cattle is flat-backed like the European, and could not therefore be the parent of the humped breeds. The buffalo which is undoubtedly derived from the wild animal in India is flat-blacked, and so is the Mithan of Assam which has a wild strain in it.

Secondly, all humped animals are denizens of desert or semi-desert country or at the most of grassland. They do not live naturally in a forest country.

Thirdly, the Indian humped cattle at its most developed and typical is found in the Punjab and nearby regions. As it goes more and more east the Zebu loses its hump. In Bengal, for example, the hump of even the biggest of bulls is relatively small, and nowhere near in size to that of the magnificent Sahiwal bull. The best milch cows of India, too, belong to the west, and the breeds are Sindhi, Multani, and Sahiwal. There is a progressive reduction in the yield of milk as the cow moves east.

Fourthly, the humped cattle rapidly deteriorated if the west Indian breeds were taken to Bengal, and the regions of heavy monsoons. It was my father who first told about this too. Seeing that the cows of Bengal gave hardly a pint of milk a day, whereas the north Indian breeds gave ten or twenty times more, I used to pester him with the question why we did not keep the better breeds. My father answered me with the same curtness as he showed when I questioned him about thatch and pasture: 'They do not survive.' Later, I had an opportunity for verifying this. Around 1912 we were living in a very rustic suburb of Calcutta where there was a large dairy farm. It had magnificent cows from western Punjab, Sind, Gujarat, Mysore, and Hissar. I cannot say how I enjoyed seeing them grazing. But in a year or two all the animals died.

Perhaps it was because the humped cattle was delicate, not only in Bengal, but all over India, that the people of

the Gangetic plain made the buffalo, a hardier native type, the second and even the principal source of supply for milk. But the more Aryan or Brahmanic a Hindu is, the less does he like to drink the buffalo's milk.

So to me it seems to be fairly well established that the humped cattle of India was a native of the dry Middle East, and had to be kept alive in India with continual care and attention. This is confirmed by the known facts of the distribution of the Zebu. As a living type, it is found in a more or less developed form from Somaliland to Kansu in China. The presence of the same type, together with flat-backed cattle, is proved by archaeological evidence from the earliest Mesopotamian sites. Therefore, in spite of the currently held view, I have no hesitation in regarding the Zebu as a foreigner in India just as we Hindus also are.

The pathos generated by the fragility of the humped cattle must have been heightened by the Aryan's sense of its beauty of appearance, as the consciousness of beauty was also given a keener edge by the fragility. Burke has very truly said that an appearance of delicacy, and even of *fragility*, is almost essential to beauty. In any case, there is no doubt whatever that the Indian humped cattle has a handsomeness which is not surpassed by many animals. When our cattle is properly fed and looked after there are few combinations of form and colour among living creatures which are more beautiful. With due respect for the European cattle for its other qualities (mostly man-made) I would say that ours is more beautiful to look at.

I was delighted to find from the Mahabharata that the ancient Hindus were fully aware of this beauty. There is a story in it which says that once upon a time the goddess Lakshmi, who confers both wealth and beauty on mankind, came to a herd of cattle, and offered to live in their bodies, in order to make them more beautiful. 'No, thank you,' replied the spokeswoman of the cows, 'we are ourselves so beautiful that we do not need to take

you in to become so.' '*Shabash*, cow!' as we say in India, or in the European manner: 'Bravo, cow!'

I shall explain the reason for my enthusiasm. Lakshmi is the Hindu goddess of wealth, and in recent years a very degraded form of her cult has become popular even among Anglicized Hindus. In this cult she is the goddess of money in its most sordid form, for she is only the Goddess of Paisa, and the Westernized Hindu, in spite of his secularism, is given to grovelling at her feet. But in the true Hindu tradition Lakshmi was a different goddess altogether. Since the religious outlook of the Hindus is very materialistic, she could not help being the goddess of material prosperity, but it was material prosperity in a sanctified form. Lakshmi was Sri and Kalyani, the embodiment of grace and welfare with an unearthly connotation, which is better expressed in the Latin words *gratia* and *salus*. The prosperity she conferred was *sanctus* and *umbratilis*, holy and shadowy at the same time. She is not to be confused with the fetish of money the modern Hindus have made her, and the cows had the courage and self-respect to reject even her. The Aryan who could endow the cow with such a sense of her own beauty might well worship her.

Let me, however, pursue the beauty of the cattle on the purely physical plane, leaving its intangible aspect alone. The bulls, cows, and calves are all a delight to see in their different ways. In the eye of the ancient Hindu the bull was so impressive a creature that he would call any fine figure of a man a 'bull of a man' *nara-pungava*. In Sanskrit literature a white bull is described as *Kailasagaura*, as white as the Kailasa mountain, whose appropriateness will be admitted by anybody who has seen the magnificent white Hariana bulls or bullocks, and especially those which used to draw the artillery of the Indian Army in the olden days. The calves on their part were considered so adorable that the word for them has become the commonest word for a child in northern India. The cows, if one might say so, held the balance between the impassive majesty of the bulls and the gay abandon of the calves.

The static beauty of our humped cattle has been embodied for all time in our sculpture. But the beauty of movement which it shows is not less enchanting. Dusk is called *Go-dhuli*, Kinedust, in Sanskrit, and it is a sight of extraordinary beauty to see the herds coming home. It is only then and in this condition that the dust of India is transformed into something lovable. It rises in whirling clouds of grey to form a background for the wavy lines of moving cattle, in their colour schemes of dun, tawny, chocolate, white, black, and many pastel shades.

These scenes are painted with unsurpassed loveliness in the miniatures of the Kangra school, and it is in the idyllic quality of the going out to the pastures and coming home of our humped cattle that one finds a key to one of the most amazing transformations of a legendary personality, which has shocked neither the sense nor the sensibility of the Hindus only because they are so used to contradictions. It is the metamorphosis of the Aryan hero Krishna—strong in battle and wily in counsel, who can urge cousins to kill cousins in war—into a cowherd, a lover of milkmaids, and a player of the bamboo pipe. The Homeric character has become Theocritian and even softer. What would a Greek have thought had he found Ulysses converted into Daphnis?

But the Hindu always had reverence and *pietas* for bucolic life, in which he only showed himself to be a member of the great human family which spoke the Indo-European languages. To these feelings he added the pathos which surrounded the humped cattle in India, and the combination could be an adequate explanation for even such a transformation as we see in Krishna.

To those Western readers who wish to have a feel of this bucolic Krishna and who yet cannot read the Krishna cycle in Sanskrit or Bengali I would recommend the few lines that Kipling has on him in his story of *The Bridge-builders*. I have never been able to understand how an Englishman who had not read Jayadeva, Vidyapati,

Chandidas, Jnanadas, or Govindadas was able to get so near to the quintessence of Vaishnava poetry.

I come now to the second question; how among the Hindus the natural kindness for cattle became a religious feeling, and how the purely economic argument for not killing the humped cattle in India became a taboo. This, however, is nothing but a normal procedure with the Hindus. The Hindus discovered quite early in their existence in India that they could not preserve any delicate sensibility without making it a part of piety, nor could they keep up effort without making it a religious duty. To make things secular in this country is to make them weak, vulgar, and eroded. So, in making their cattle sacred, the Hindus were doing nothing which was exceptional in any way.

Even in my young days the cult was different, wherever it was free from the xenophobia and retained its original spirit. In my autobiography I have described one annual pastoral festival. In my mother's village, I wrote, 'All the cows, bulls, and oxen were washed and decorated for the occasion with paint, shell chains, and garlands of flowers, and made to go round and round in a wavy movement, which on account of the flowing outlines of our humped cattle, was almost like a minuet.'

But, as in river-worship, so in the cult of cattle the deepest reverence and the most poetic quality were to be found in the daily routine, and that routine of care was at its best in relatively humble homes, for instance, a homestead of thatched cottages with yellow corn ricks, by a sluggish and reedy stream or a large shining tank, in which ducks swam about, a place in which the sons of the family home from their hostels in Calcutta could forget not only examinations but also time. Even when he kept a number of servants the master of the house saw to it that the cows were properly fed, and in any case the mistress did. Under them, the cows had a second ring of protection formed by the daughters and daughters-in-law, who took care of them as if to symbolize the friend-

ship between the Graces among human beings and the Graces among animals. All of them seemed to remember the saying in the Mahabharata that if a cow cast a thirst-afflicted glance at a family they perished to the last person.

So, at a sudden rumble of thunder, a girl would rush out of a cottage, swinging her long plait, and look anxiously at the sky. Knitting her brows until they joined up to make a curved black line—a small longbow—under her little forehead, she would try to decide whether a rainstorm was coming and she should have the cows brought in.

But perhaps the most characteristic part of the ritual was the placing of the lamp in the cowshed in the evening. At nightfall no room in a Hindu home could be without its lamp, for Sri, Grace of the world, shunned dark places. So even the platform of the sacred tulsi—basil, and the cowshed had their lamps.

As dusk gathers, the mistress of the house hears the ducks quacking, sees the cowboy, naked but for his wispy clout, at first walking in, then caracoling and capering about in the wide courtyard, trying to beat up the darkness with his goad, and she calls out: '*Bau-ma, ma bru,* daughter-in-law! Put the lamp in the cowshed. The boy has brought in the cows and the calves.' 'Going, mother!' comes the reply in a soft whisper from the tulsi platform. The young daughter-in-law takes up another lamp and walks towards the cowshed, her face dimly lit up by the flickering flame. Seeing her going that way, the cowboy bounds forward, runs before her, and enthrones himself on the dung-heap, knocking off the heads of the arums which are growing in clumps all around. As the daugter-in-law passes him, he grins and says: 'Bride-Sister, I have filled the mangers.'

The girl goes in, puts the lamp on a pillar of mud near the pen of the calves, all of whom have muzzles of wicker but do not look any the less roguish for being deprived of

the power to rob milk. Then she stands still in reverie, minding neither the reek nor the pungent smell of oilcake.

The cows on their part stare at her, with their large liquid eyes, which grow even more liquid as the little lamp only makes the darkness seem thicker than before. Animals do not feel grief. Yet tears of all things appear to gather in those eyes. At last a very faint voice comes borne on the darkness, and if it is piercing that is only because of its pain. It says from ever so far away: 'Daughter! Come back to me from your dread Hades. Come back to Europe of the living. Come where you like—to snow-covered Russia, pine-covered Germany, or corn-covered Sicily. Only come back, Persephone, Persephone, Persephone!'

Hot tears wet the cheeks of the Bengali woman. She could not have heard the call, or if she heard anything at all she could only have felt it as a deaf-mute feels music by passing his hands over the baffle-cloth of his wireless set. Yet her heart is intolerably oppressed. She wipes her tears, and goes out of the hovel.

My foreign friends often notice on the faces of Hindu women who have not ruined their appearance by Feringhizing themselves, a sweet *gravitas*, and a pensive sadness, through which even their gayest smiles come out like streaks of sun through rain-clouds. Since women's smiles are three-quarters biological, they cannot understand how that can be. May I tell them that the soft shadow is cast by the sorrow of a Persephone who does not know who she is, for a Demeter she has forgotten?

Once upon a time Three Kings came to a cowshed to see a great beauty. Nobody, let alone kings, has ever come to our cowsheds, and our new rulers are trying to destroy the beauty without ever seeing it. They plead the overriding interests of industrialization, and are naturally incapable of seeing that in reality nothing stands between the beauty and industrialization except their castrated minds. The result is awful. Hinduism will never be destroyed, but its beauty is perishable, for all beauty is

fragile. So what is surviving is only the ugliness of Hinduism, and what forms of ugliness!

Chapter 9

THE DEFIANCE

In spite of the loss of recollection which accompanied it, the clinging of the Hindus to the symbols of their pre-Indian existence had both life and beauty so long as they themselves retained some vitality, and even after life had gone the way of memory among them suggestions of both remained and were not wholly effaced. The latent warmth in these loyalties could still be felt by those who had not been totally robbed of sensibility, and to see these things surviving from a forgotten past with a reawakened historical consciousness is like standing by stalactites and stalagmites, the columns of Timgad, clumps of mandragora, or beds of those strange succulent plants called lithops. The great Sanskrit poet Kalidasa has written that when men see beautiful scenes or hear sweet sounds they grow wistful even in their happy moods as if the friendships of their previous births were floating up from unsounded depths to the surface of memory. In the same way, the cults of the Vedas, the rivers, and the cow evoke in us Hindus feelings which seem to drift in from a world beyond any existence of which we have knowledge.

But no such suggestion was or is present in the second expression of the Hindu nostalgia for the forgotten home, which, as I have said, is a fantastic defiance thrown out to the new motherland. It had no atmosphere, and was as bare and clean-cut as St Simeon Stylites on his column under the sky of Syria, and it cast as hard a shadow on the ground. This defiance was of two kinds—the first wholly physical, and the second emotional. But both were

equally stark and unattractive without a religious cloak, and that was thrown on both of them.

There is early evidence for the emergence of the physical defiance. It comes from the Greeks who wrote about India. When they came here with Alexander the Great they saw devotees of knowledge or wisdom, to whom judging by appearance they gave the name of 'gymnosophists',—'naked men of knowledge'. Whether these men had knowledge may be open to question, but there can be no doubt that they were *'gymnos'*—naked. The orders of the scantily clad sadhus of India were already in existence.

The world knows so much about these men, with their grades of nudity and semi-nudity, their matted or coiled hair and general hirsuteness, their sack-cloth and ashes, and their self-mortification and self-torture that I need not describe them at all. In this age of democracy and secularism in India they have even learnt to copy secular ways, and formed trade unions. The Western journalists who want information about their ways and ideas may now go to these associations.

What, however, nobody seems to suspect is the possibility that this impressive mortification of the flesh through the sacrifice of creature comforts, cleanliness, and appearance might have been due to the climate and weather of India. Now, if the dust of the country showed itself to be inescapable, the easiest way to resist it was to demonstrate that it did not matter—that it did not deserve the notice it was crying out for and getting from unwise Westerners. The sadhus did better, they spited the dust and dirt by smearing their bodies with ashes themselves. Again, if the heat was intolerable, one could learn to be indifferent to it by sitting on burning charcoal. The pricks and smarts which were everywhere could be made innocuous by sleeping on a bed of spikes. These men seemed to be determined to conquer their environment by inflicting more discomfort on themselves of their free will than any set of living conditions could. And

certainly Nature could not have done worse to the appearance of human beings than what some Hindus chose to do to theirs.

In course of time this form of defiance became thoroughly organized and systematized in schools. The different orders of the sadhus could be distinguished by individual styles of uncouthness. The most extreme and assertive school, which exists even now, is the well-known order of the Naga Sanyasis, or naked sadhus, who go about completely unclothed, and march down in a solid body of thousands of men to the Ganges on the occasion of the Kumbha bathing festival, about which I have spoken. This famous march is watched by thousands of lay spectators, the majority of whom consist of pious and curious women. The pilgrims line the route of the march in immense crowds, and their motive is utterly different from that of the touristic rabble who go to the Folies-Bergères.

By all accounts the sight is impressive. The serried ranks of the Naga sadhus, all with matted hair and ash-smeared bodies, go forward in a steady tramp. They are normally powerful men, and their large genitalia dangle vigorously to the rhythm of the steps. I am told that even with those thousands of women looking on, not one glance is cast by the sadhus towards them, nor one single genital is seen to be in an improper state. This might sound incredible, but it is the truth. For any of the sadhus to have directed a leer or to have been in any but a placid state would have been an unforgivable offence. He would have been as great a disgrace to his corps as the guardsman who dropped it. But no sadhu could really be capable of such stumbling, because those who had defied the climate and weather of northern India in the ruthless fashion which was theirs could never exhibit such softness. Their flamboyancy could be advertised through indifference alone, and not through excitement. I do not think that any naked sadhu would have behaved

differently had all the thousands of women present there been as unclad as they were themselves.*

Such extremism could not, of course, be maintained in a simple secular order and in a purely worldly spirit. I have already said that a religious cloak was thrown on it. If, however, by that I created the impression that the defiant self-mortification came first and independently, and was given a religious complexion later and as an afterthought, that certainly was wrong. Both went together from the very beginning. In regard to the problem of facing the dirt and squalor created by the climate and weather of the country, the Hindus created two very special attitudes quite early, and both are continuing till this day. Each needs a few words.

The first of these attitudes was natural and positive, though it was also extreme to the point of extravagance. It was to be found among those who remained in the world, and had not abandoned it to become ascetics, and, as I have said, it exists today. It is a maniacal anxiety for physical cleanliness, a super-Pharisaism. People afflicted with it, who are mostly women, bathe and wash all day long, purify everything they use, even paths, with Ganges water or cow dung, live in mortal fear of ritualistic contamination. I knew a lady—she was distantly related to me—and she used to wash bed-clothes —not sheets or pillow-cases, but quilts and mattresses —every morning even in winter.

This monomania must have originated in the first unpleasant experiences of the Aryans when they came into a tropical country. They found the dirt formidable, far more difficult to counteract than in temperate lands, and yet the labour to remove it was so great that it could not be faced with readiness. Therefore a more powerful motivation for cleanliness was treated by making the hygienic duty a part of religious duties. This was effect-

* There may be a slight poetic licence in this passage. I have heard that there is, in certain cases, a physical impediment to flamboyance. But I refuse to believe that it is necessary.

ual, and it created a fear of dirt which no modern American or north European housewife can rival. Though the burden of maintaining purity in this manner was intolerably heavy, the number of people, especially women, who shouldered it not only cheerfully but even fanatically was very large even in my young days. All of them regarded cleanliness as superior to godliness.

The highest type of Hindu spirituality, on the other hand, arrived at a different solution, which was that of the sadhus. This solution rejected the Hindu Pharisaism, just as Jesus did the Jewish, but it went much further than Jesus. While he only taught that 'to eat with unwashen hands defileth not a man', the Hindu holy men made indifference to filth an essential attribute of saintliness. At the highest level of spiritual ascent, they said, all things must be equal to the devotee, and the most commonly cited opposites which were to be regarded as the same were sandalwood paste and faeces. Of this achievement, we used to be told a remarkable edificatory tale in boyhood. It was about the famous holy man in Benares of the nineteenth century, Trailanga Swami, who never wore anything.

One day a man came to him, like the young man in the gospel, to learn what he must do for salvation. Now, Hindu spirituality insists on purity of heart as the very first qualification for *sadhana* or spiritual discipline, and so the holy man asked the aspirant: 'Do you have purity of heart?' 'I hope so, Master,' replied the man. 'Oh, you do,' observed the Swami, 'let me see.' Then he began to excrete at will through the power of Yoga, this being one of the elementary achievements of this spiritual effort, and he rose on his faeces. He was an enormous man, even so he rose about a foot, and then getting down from the pile and pointing to it, he commanded, 'Eat that up.' The poor man could not, but the holy man took up large handfuls and swallowed back the whole stuff. All recognized the sign.

The story may be a hagiolatrous invention, and in any case it must have contained a large amount of exaggeration. I would say this even at the risk of rousing the ire of the large number, becoming ever larger, of Anglicized Hindus who are taking to Yoga, and of their Western *gurus*. But there is no doubt that the attitude of mind which inspired the story is absolutely genuine, and also very common in Hindu society. To illustrate this I shall relate an anecdote from my personal experience. It is about an incident which took place around 1925, through which a friend of mine acquired if not a quite undeserved, at least a wholly unsought reputation for saintliness and spiritual powers.

He was given to bravado, and one day he laid a bet that he would take up some filth from the pan of the W.C. and eat it. He did and won his bet, which was five rupees. None of those who saw him doing this thought any the worse of him as a man who was prepared to do anything for a little money. The idea of pelf would have seemed indecorous to them. They were only astonished that they had never suspected his latent holiness. One young man fell at his feet sobbing, 'With your blessing, Master! I shall also do it.' He tried but vomited outright. The others pitied him, but they also disapproved of his presumption.

To recapitulate, the interaction of the climate and the human mind generated two special attitudes towards material squalor in Hindu society: first, the abnormal sensitiveness to it, leading to the washing mania; and the second, the philosophical or mystical indifference, parading philosophy and mysticism to the point of co-prophagy and beating Diogenes hollow. But it must also be added that, below the level down to which the Hindu outlook on life and cultural consciousness seeped, there remained a wholly non-religious—because it was virtually *un*human—passive defiance of squalor. It came from the commonalty, the Amhaarez of Hindu society. They found the physical and mental strain of maintaining the

resistance to dirt in the religious manner intolerable. To them the purity mania was altogether beyond reason, and the other extreme, the sadhu's indifference, equally absurd. So, afraid of being crushed between two millstones, they began to compromise, and as the climate operated more and more intensely on their outlook they became wholly neutral to squalor. The final result was an easy-going and even happy co-existence with it.

Let me now consider the second form of the defiance —which, I have said, was emotional. It will have been seen that even the physical defiance which was given expression through an unqualified acceptance of squalor and glorification of it, had already been emotionalized and become capable of affording mental satisfaction. But this satisfaction was to be had at one remove, as a means to an end, and that end not clearly perceived. Often the defiant asceticism looked like being the sort of meaningless gesture an angry man makes, or even like the gestures of vicarious contempt which children make at something which is too powerful for them. I do not know whether this is seen anywhere else, but in India at all events it is a common experience to see peasant boys uncovering themselves and waving their hips at a passing train and its passengers. The life of the Naga sadhus may be said to be a glorified version of this boyish behaviour.

Therefore the Hindus were led on quite naturally to take the next step in defying their milieu by making self-mortification the instrument of a higher gratification in itself. In this extended aspect, the later Hindu asceticism, which the sadhus practised, was derived from an older Aryan form of self-mortification. The Aryan had little liking and less respect for abnegation as such, and he saw no meaning in mere self-mortification even when it was regarded as a moral discipline. But he did understand and practise mortification of the flesh as a means of power, especially supernatural power, with which he could set at nought not only the processes of nature but

even the will of the gods. The Hindus have always worshipped power for power's sake, and there is nothing they yearn for more than the removal of external checks on their desires and aspirations.

Stories of this kind of self-mortification are found in large numbers in the Hindu epics and other collections of legends. They describe the successes and failures of ambitious men who of their free will went through a severe regimen of pain and deprivation in order to acquire occult powers. It was believed that this could be done, and therefore the gods are also represented as taking alarm at certain extra-rigorous penances by individuals, lest they might use the power thus obtained to usurp the heaven and lay their hand, among the many delights of the place, on nectar, ambrosia, and the celestial courtesans. The gods did everything they could to interrupt and nullify the penances and bring about the fall of the pretenders. The latter Hindu asceticism was a natural development of this pursuit of power through self-mortification.

So also was Buddhistic asceticism at its origin. Buddha himself declared when he sat down to his last course of mortification of the flesh under the great Bo tree: 'My body may wither as I remain seated here, my skin, bones, and muscles may dissolve, but I shall not rise until I have found the enlightenment I seek and and have not achieved.' By the time he found it he was reduced to a mere skeleton covered with skin. Here, however, the penances were a means of arriving at the ultimate truth or wisdom, and afterwards in Buddhism asceticism became a moral discipline whose object was liberation of the mind from desire, which was regarded as the source of all unhappiness, suffering, and sorrow.

Not so in Hinduism, which never cared for this kind of negative good. Hindu spirituality even at its most unworldly and serene had a kind of supermagical motivation. It was something like an Aladdin's lamp, which could call a jinni to the service of man. Of course, the

association between supernatural power which is capable of working miracles and religion is found among many peoples, but the Hindus developed it to a degree never seen in any civilized community I know of. In this matter the civilized people that the Hindus were never rose above the primitive level of religious consciousness, in spite of their philosophical preoccupation. Even today Hindu religious beliefs and practices retain a direct magical character, and are imbued with the spirit of animism, homoeopathic magic, and spells. The contemporary sadhus are credited with supernatural powers in many things, mostly mundane, with which they can ensure such results as are never to be hoped for from any conceivable natural means.

From this pursuit of the occult for exceptional powers to conquer Nature and set human desires free, it was only one step to treat the occult as a means of defence against the suffering inflicted by the forces of Nature, which was an immediate and ever-present evil. In India Nature's relentless enmity to man has destroyed his self-confidence and completely undermined his faith in rational measures. Thus it happens that whenever he is in trouble and even when rational means exist and are applied, the Hindu will never remain satisfied with that, but call in the supernatural, sometimes as an auxiliary and sometimes even as the principal ally.

There are stories in Sanskrit literature of women going through severe penances to secure a desired husband and of kings doing the same thing to recover lost kingdoms. Nowadays it is quite a common experience to see the priest and the medicine-man being called in along with the doctor in illness, and the lawyer and the goddess Kali both briefed for a law-suit. My elder brother who is a lawyer told me the story of a man he had seen one day in Calcutta High Court, who was holding sacred Bel leaves from the Kali temple at Kalighat and muttering spells during the whole time his advocate was arguing the case. He informed me later that the man ac-

tually won his suit. These coincidences certainly keep alive the belief in the supernatural. There are few men in India today, out after money or office, who do not try to coerce the gods or spirits.

This continual evocation of the occult and recourse to it in worldly matters is now an established tradition in Hindu society. It has become so much a part of the habitual Hindu reaction to their physical environment that it can be regarded as a form of defiance to it. The occult is thrown at the head of every kind of ill man is subject to as a secular being, and therefore even the 'secularists' who are now running the government of the country see nothing incongruous in their perpetual falling back on the occult, including yoga to maintain physical efficiency. Thus, just as there is no escape from the environment, there is also no escape from the supernatural. But it must be added that the Hindus get from it a consolation and confidence which otherwise would never have been theirs.

Chapter 10

THE ANODYNE

THE impulsive and for the most part unconscious defence which the Hindus put up against the ceaseless beating of suffering on their life could not be described as fighting, hardly even regarded as defence properly so called. At best, their strategy and tactics, so far as these were deliberately thought out, could ensure only that kind of respite which in war is given by retreat combined with a policy of scorched earth. But there it is a desperate recourse and justified even as such only by the maxim: *reculer pour mieux sauter*, and practicable only when the defender is not easily driven against the

ropes. Neither the aim nor the prerequisite stood behind the Hindu system of defence against sorrow. A final offensive was not even dreamt of, flight and scorched earth were ends in themselves. In short, the Hindus were called upon to destroy the very things which they wished to defend, in order to keep up nothing more than an appearance of defence.

As for the philosophical remedy, I have already said that it made itself unacceptable by its unrelieved nihilism. It preached the negation of the world without putting anything in its place, a mistake Christianity never committed. If the Christian was asked to turn his back on the world as a vanity or evil, at least he was offered a *civitas dei* for the unsatisfying *civitas terrena.* Hindu philosophy had nothing but extinction to offer. This was bound to repel any set of normal men, but above all the Hindu, whose outlook was dominantly materialistic and mundane.

The other two antidotes, that is, defiant self-mortification and search for power against nature through the occult, had greater appeal, because they offered some sort of emotional compensation. But it goes to the credit of Hindu society as a whole that it rejected these also as illusory palliatives. Although in their moments of weakness some Hindus did rush to these wickets of escape, in general they maintained their ground and remained staunch in their mundane pragmatism. They carried on the struggle in the only way which was natural to them.

In respect of human suffering in general, as well as its prevention and cure, the Hindu philosopher and the Hindu man of the world, *l'homme sensuel moyen hindou,* were wholly at variance, and even at war. The philosopher contemptuously, and with that directness which makes all Hindu pronouncements on the fundamentals of life almost shattering, described the worldly man as the man of the French phrase, but in a Sanskrit epigram which had no touch of euphemism in it. It proclaimed:

'Narah vai sisnodara-parayanah

—verily, man is a creature devoted to the penis and the belly.'

Summing up the empiric reactions to sorrow and suffering of these men, as understood and analysed by themselves, the philosophers said that these worldlings applied three sets of remedies to the three kinds of sorrow. So far as the sorrow of the self was concerned, for its physical part, they took herbal medicines; and for the psychological, they had recourse to food, drink, and women. To avert suffering from external sources, animate or inanimate, they followed the precepts of the manuals of practical conduct (Nitisastra, in its private part), which among other things recommended that a man was to remain at a distance of ten cubits from horned animals and a hundred cubits from a horse. For preventing or counteracting suffering from supernatural agencies and acts of God, they performed propitiatory rites and sacrifices. As is well known, the Hindus do all these things even today without making any changes in the form and spirit of their traditional practices.

But the philosophers had no faith in all these, and they declared that all these antidotes were vain and even foolish. As a commentator on the Yoga system of philosophy (not to be confused with the despicable charlatanry which besmirches the name of Yoga) put the matter, attempts to assuage sorrow and suffering by these means and more especially through sensual enjoyments were of no avail. Then he summed up the vanity of the attempt in a brilliant simile:

'Sa khalvayam vrischika-visa-bhita iv'asivisena dasto

—Truly, it is like getting bitten by a snake from the fear of a scorpion's poison.' This, said the philosopher, only led to a deeper mire of sorrow.

Yet these were the only methods which the Hindus would practise, because these were the only ones they

understood, and had any faith in. Their defeat was on the fleshly plane. So they thought that the rehabilitation must also be in the flesh. Here and now, by the five organs of the senses and the five organs of action life had to be justified.* All the rest was empty consolation, mere palaver. That was the basic position of the Hindus so long as they had any vitality left in them, and that also was the starting point of their unphilosophical—if not anti-philosophical, human, and practical struggle against the suffering inflicted on them by their cruel environment. The torture was in the world, the release, and in any case the resistance, had also to be there.

Therefore, so far as they were not prepared to yield ground, and as a community the Hindus were not ready to do so, they fought back on the only terrain which was familiar and real to them—that is to say, the sensuous and the sensual. Each one of them stood squarely and defiantly on it, and cried: *'J'y suis et j'y reste.'*

In this spirit they carried on their war on suffering, as their suffering also carried on its war on them. It was a battle of attrition to which Wilderness or even Verdun was as nothing. It reminds me only of a fight which took place in Calcutta, for two or three days to my recollection, between a python and a giant lizard, in which the lizard won only to die later of its wounds.

The Hindu would have his victory in sensual enjoyments, and above all in that which was the most precious to his thinking, namely, sexual relations in terms of the flesh. Even if he could not win, he would use his pleasure as an anodyne to carry on the fight, as the Rajput warrior took opium to maintain his callousness to wounds. It is extraordinary to note what a high and even intangible value the Hindu set on a purely physical satisfaction. In his view, it was one of the supreme joys

* The five organs of sense are the eyes, ears, tongue, nose, skin; the five organs of action are the hands (with arms), feet (with legs), mouth, anus, and penis.

of life, hardly behind spiritual exultation. No one who concerns himself with the Hindus can by-pass that baffling preoccupation.

It scandalizes, or at all events startles, Western observers. But the learned in the West have largely misunderstood it, and the unlearned have been repelled, though I must also add that in their dirty moods they have rather enjoyed what they on principle regard as Hindu dirtiness. The Anglicized Hindus who only know how to play the sedulous ape to Westerners, react more or less like the unlearned in the West, but there are also a few among them who try to defend the honour of Hinduism by throwing into this galley the commonplace, secondhand, modern, and contemptible Hindu spiritual rigmarole.

I shall not defend the Hindus in this manner. O foreigners who are visiting or staying in India! I know that you go to Khajuraho and Konarak in the name of our art and religion; I know that, standing in a crowd, you stare at the sculptures with the affected unconcern which spectators assume, when standing before the lions' cage in a zoo, they watch the animals coupling *coram populo*, a forced exhibitionism for the poor beasts which would kill anybody who dared intrude on them in the wilds; I know that you sell your photographs if you are photographers, and buy them from others if you are not; I know too that when you meet your highly spiritual Anglicized Hindu friends in the so-called 'prestige quarters' of New Delhi, Calcutta, and Bombay, you haul yourself up to their spiritual height and ask them reverently for enlightenment; and, lastly, I know that when you hear the explanations you wonder with your natural irreverence whether the fellows are fools or knaves—O foreigners, you who do all these things, please do not take me for one of these spiritual Hindus. If you expect explanations from me, I warn you humbly, you will have to put up with some amount of plain speaking.

Let me now begin my exposition of what I consider to be the real Hindu point of view. For the Hindus, there was nothing else to do about sexual life except to go about in the way they did. They could not transform it by infusing into it love in the Western sense, because they were quite incapable of taking any views of the sexual activity which was not physical. So they had to glorify the sex act in itself, and they did so with a perfervid lyricism.

No Hindu would have understood the disillusioned, or if I may be permitted to coin a word—the 'dis-idealized' view of the urge for sexual satisfaction (which I think even Montaigne professed) that it was something like the impulse to defaecate. Nor would he have accepted the view of Diogenes the Cynic who put hunger above lust as a source of human misery because, as he put it, he could satisfy the one with his hands whereas the other always demanded hard and painful labour. Both the standpoints would have seemed impious to the Hindus, and even at the risk of wearying my readers I would say again that the reason which lay behind the Hindu attitude was that the exhaustion of the capacity for sensual enjoyment made them cling to fleshly joys with correspondingly greater desperation.

But, historically, there was an age when the Hindus could enjoy these joys in a very direct, extrovert, and unthinking manner. That stage preceeded their attempts at rehabilitating the flesh. One might say that the struggle for saving sensual enjoyment began simultaneously with the appearance of the philosophy of sorrow, and that the two ran in parallel courses. It is necessary to say something about the first age of innocence, not only for the sake of giving a complete story, but also to make the later age of knowledge and self-torture intelligible.

I must, however, caution the reader that for evidence as to the attitudes and practices of the earlier phase I have had to draw largely on the Hindu myths and legends, whose historical value might be questioned by some.

But I hope my position will also be understood, and my method admitted to be legitimate in view of the circumstances. Owing to the very inadequate development of the historical and scientific spirit among the Hindus, the greater part of their early historical traditions remains embedded only in myths. But when judiciously analysed they yield valuable historical information which otherwise would be totally absent. I have very little doubt in my mind that the sketch of the early phase of the sexual life of the Hindus which I am going to offer, though based on legends, corresponds in its broad outlines to an actual historical situation. Besides, I might add that even Plato made use of myths and allegories, and though I go to them in a different spirit I seek the protection of his great example.

From the Rigveda down to the epics, especially the Mahabharata, one faces a consistent attitude towards sex life. It is based on a frank acceptance of the flesh, gusto in sensual pleasures, and is marked by a total absence of any kind of forced continence and, of course. sense of guilt. I shall give only one example of the frankness, and that from our most venerated book, the first and foremost of our revealed scriptures, the Rigveda. In it Indrani, the Queen Goddess, defies the virility of her lord, Indra the King God and Thunder-bearer, in these words:

Na sese yasya rambate'ntara sakthya'kaprit;
Sedise yasya romasam niseduso vijrimbhate.

He achieves not—he whose penis hangs limp between the thighs;
Achieves he alone whose hairy thing swells up when he lies.

—Rigveda: Mandala X, Sukta 86, verse 16

This early testimony to Indrani's vigorous forthrightness did not indeed come in the way of the later conception of her as a very dignified and queenly beauty. 'As beautiful as Sachi', that is Indrani, or 'She has put

Sachi into the shade', became stock phrases to emphasize the beauty of a mortal woman. But the Vedic passages about her sexual vigour seem to have had a curious survival. In later erotic literature the most aggressive posture in which a woman could offer herself to a man came to be called 'Indrani' (I think the gynaecologists call it the lithotomy position)—poor goddess!

The Vedic and epic gods are as lecherous as the Olympians, and Indra, the supreme warrior god, is the most reckless of them all. He was always after the beautiful wives of the sages, and was given to seducing them by assuming the form of their husbands. Once by so doing he brought a terrible punishment on himself. He was caught by the sage, and chastised by a curse which was very malicious and vindictive. It is curious that in Hindu mythology Indra is always shown to be at loggerheads with the Rishis or sages.

In order to mark Indra as an incorrigible lecher the sage in this case laid the curse that he would have one full thousand *pudenda muliebria* all over his body, and they appeared at once. Horrified by the prospect of cutting a sadly ridiculous figure in his own heaven among his fellow-gods, and particularly before his courtesans, who were likely to die of tittering to the last divine harlot, he implored the sage to withdraw the curse. That was impossible, because of the infallibility of the sages, which, though not proclaimed by a General Council, was universally admitted. All that the sage could do was to change the *pudenda* into eyes, and since then Indra has been known as the Thousand-eyed. No Pope has ever inflicted a greater Canossa on a temporal ruler. But even that did not cure Indra of his weakness, and he tried the game again with the wife of another sage, and was foiled only by the resourcefulness of a disciple.

Even more significance than the lechery of the Hindu gods is the full and active sexual life attributed to the sages or Rishis. When they were alone they became extremely excitable, somewhat in the manner of rogue

elephants living their solitary life away from the herds. Then the mere sight of naked or semi-naked women made them forget themselves, and even brought about involuntary emissions. These temptresses were mostly celestial courtesans bathing in earthly rivers, and taking off from the water against the wind like aeroplanes.

The sages had a normal, and at times more than normal, sexual life in their tranquil hermitages as well. There is no hint anywhere that in order to arrive at their spiritual exultations and see the visions which were set down as the Upanishads, they had to practise chastity of the Gandhian type. They are indications even of preoccupations of a wholly different kind: that in the hermitages there was a good deal of dignified flirtation, and a certain amount of discreet adultery, in addition to the violent love at first sight between handsome princes and beautiful hermitage girls about which Europe has heard so much ever since Goethe, with all his experience of affairs, found Sakuntala irresistible. A passage in the Mahabharata makes it a special title to praise for the wife of a sage that during his absence she did not misbehave with other sages, but lived in strict seclusion.

But even early Aryan society, despite its robust naturalism, knew that something besides unthinking enjoyment had to be brought into sexual life. So early Brahmanism made procreation its supreme motive. To this, it added, a beautifully effervescent affection, deep and sparkling at the same time. This picture of conjugal devotion is presented again and again in Sanskrit literature, and its *locus classicus* is, of course, *Uttara-Ramacharita* of Bhavabhuti. There is also a touching image in the second canto of the *Raghuvamsa* by Kalidasa, in which a wife is shown waiting for the return of her husband at the door of her cottage, and, as soon as he is seen at a distance, is described as drinking him with her eyes. Who knows but that 'Drink to me only with thine eyes' is an Aryan symbolism?

Procreation, on its part, was so exalted that it became an imperative religious duty to go to the wife at the close of her period. *'Ritukalabhigami syat svadara-niratah sada*—Thou shalt go at the period, and shall attend thine wife', declared the sacred law. That men did so was one of the features of the Hindu Golden Age.

This duty had precedence over most others, and I give an illustration or two. Once King Dilipa was on a visit to Indra when he got a message that his queen was on the point of bathing after her period. He at once left heaven, and as he was being driven home, forgot in his hurry to get down from his chariot and salute the Cow Goddess of Heaven, who was chewing the cud by the wayside. Angered by the apparent disrespect, whose cause she did not know but which she would certainly have forgiven if she knew it, the Celestial Cow laid the curse on Dilip that he would have to tend her daughter Nandini for some time as a mere cowherd, which, of course, he had to do.

The more designing beauties in the hermitages even tried to exploit this religious obligation for their own purpose. One day a sage was away at the required time, and so the women of the household rushed to the favourite young disciple and asked him 'to save', as they put it, the period of his Guru's wife. The virtuous disciple refused indignantly, but he did not suffer any untoward consequences like Joseph or Hippolytus, because the ladies of the hermitage did such things on the off chance, and were nothing like *Vénus tout entière à sa proie attachée.*

The procreative motive is brought out even more clearly in certain anecdotes in the epics describing the resistance of women to improper overtures and worse. I give one of the most famous of these, concerning the great sage Vrihaspati, Preceptor of the Gods. His brother Utathya had a beautiful wife with an equally beautiful name, Mamata. Vrihaspati had his eyes on her, and the fact that she was his brother's wife, of course, meant

nothing to him. Once, when Mamata was pregnant and Utathya away, the Preceptor of the Gods saw his opportunity. He rushed into her cottage in a wild rut, and seized her. Strange as it might seem, Mamata did not rebuke him in abusive language. Among the ancient Hindus lack of urbanity even in such a situation was considered very unbecoming and un-Aryan. The lady had to show her appreciation of the compliment paid, and refuse in a courteous manner. So Mamata told Vrihaspati that she was with child of his elder brother and the child was engaged even then in Vedic studies in all its six branches in the womb. On the other hand, she added, the semen of so great a sage could not be ineffectual, and therefore he should desist, as there was no room for two children within her womb.

This sweet reasonableness had no effect on the Preceptor of the Gods, and he began and continued his outrage. The baby had held peace till then, but seeing the affair nearing its climax, intervened to protect himself. 'O uncle,' he said, 'leave it. There is no room in this womb for two, and your semen cannot be sterile. I am also the first to come into it and claim the right of primogeniture. You should not cause hurt to me.' Even then Vrihaspati would not listen, and the child, losing his temper, put out his little feet and spoilt the uncle's orgasm. Infuriated beyond measure by the frustration, Vrihaspati cried in his rage: 'You have come in my way at the most delectable moment for all living creatures. So, may you be born blind!' And born blind the baby was, for which reason he was called Dirghatama, Everlasting Darkness.

The point which I wish to make is this: that there was not one word in the expostulation either of the woman or of the baby which hinted at disapproval on the ground of lust; their objection was hitched on to the function of procreation. Western sexologists (I suppose that is the vile word), who proclaim that the sexual act has a value wholly independent of procreation (it has needed the

twentieth century to discover the beauty of functionalism in architecture and non-functionalism in sexual intercourse), will perhaps be of opinion that Vrihaspati's anger was justified and the baby's punishment deserved. But the Hindu conscience has never approved of the unjust victimization of the unborn child. The Hindu glorification of the sexual act had its code of honour.

This ordering of the man-woman relationship as a combination of social and biological duty, affection, and sexual pleasure at its most direct and naked, which the Aryan devised in the first stage of his existence in India, worked for some time, and in a weakened form it has continued even till the present. But it also began to reveal its inadequacy soon enough. With a people who set such store by purely carnal pleasures, these had to retain their savour, and the savour could not be retained at so elementary a level without a great reserve of just animal vitality. There precisely was the rub. So far from maintaining a reserve, the Aryans in India rapidly lost even what they had brought with them and drained it, as recently the Government of India has drained its sterling balances, accumulated in a temperate zone.

Thus, as soon as they began to feel that the sex act was not self-sufficient, the Hindus began to add other sensations to it, and embarked on a course of conscious elaboration of sexual life. To begin with, they brought the mind to bear on it. I had no clear perception of the connexion between the two until, as a young man and more than thirty-five years ago, I read the following lines of Julien Benda:

Ainsi s'expliquerait que les hommes capables de l'amour le plus aigu sont ceux qui savent le mieux prendre conscience des idées qui accompagnent leurs émois ou que, selon le mot d'un maître et contrairement encore à l'opinion courante, le vrai érotique soit l'analyste et non l'impulsif, l'apollinien et non le dionysiaque.

I confess that though charmed by their felicity, I was at first almost bowled over by the words, for I was a holder of the current view, made more popular still by the Romantic misinterpretation of Hamlet, which led us to believe that the native hue, not only of resolution, but even of enjoyment, was sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought. But from the moment I began to see the untruth of that assumption, and even went over to the view that contemplation and introspection were whetstones which could make sensations and emotions so sharp that they often became dangerous wounding weapons.

The Hindus saw the relationship between introspection and sexual life very soon, and the first thing they did was to romanticize the sex act as a physical reality. Indications of this are to be found in the intensely but convincingly lyricized descriptions of sexual intercourse in Sanskrit poetry, one example of which I have given. Even more revealing is a very unexpected suggestion in our erotic literature that in the intervals of coitus and in order to remove its fatigue, the husband should point out the stars to the wife. This, of course, was made by the habit of sleeping on the roof in the hot season. But for the direction to be followed the habit must have been different in ancient times from what it is now. I think, for the benefit of my Western readers, I had better explain the difference.

Even today, all over upper India, people sleep on the roof. They do so, however, only after converting it into a dormitory shared by father and mother, son and daughter-in-law, daughter with son-in-law if he happens to be on a visit, nephews and nieces, maybe grandsons and grand-daughters-in-law, *et al.* Moreover, the roofs are open to observation from one another. The sleepers have, therefore, to be properly covered, and in fact they are very scrupulous in this respect; they even over-encumber themselves with clothing to the point of discomfort. In such sleeping conditions sexual intercourse on the

roof is virtually impossible, and any romanticizing of it by star-gazing altogether out of the question. The only effect that this gregarious going to bed of families, septs, clans, agnates, and cognates has on sexual life seems to be biological. It can be held responsible for a certain periodicity in the birth of babies in these camps. This is not natural among mankind, but I do hear the seasonal crowing and crying of newly born humans as I do the squeaking of nestlings.

But in ancient times the Hindus had greater respect for privacy, and when they lived in houses which they themselves described as *abhram-liha*, 'cloud-licking', they could be as romantic on a roof as in a clump of cane. The husband would say to the wife after a round: 'Dear, do you see that bright star? It is Svati (Arcturus), as red as our desire. And that is Polaris, the Constant Star, by which you vowed before the sacred fire to be constant to our gens. That, again, the very faint star is the Conclave of the Seven Sages (Ursa Major), that speck near Vasishtha (Mizar) is Arundhati (Alcor), named after her who was a jewel in the crown of faithful women even as you are. Can you see it? No? They say he is on the threshold of death who cannot see Arundhati. May the evil thought be still! You are only sleepy, dear. I have tired you cruelly. But, love, your constancy and your desire cannot be so drowsy that they will not give your eyes, be they ever so heavy, the power to see into space—yes, into the farthest depths of it.'

To understand that shooting up to the stars from sexual intercourse, which at first blinds and startles like a rocket, one has to live on the plain of Aryavarta and under its sky. I have said enough about the first, and would only add a few words about the second. It is no ordinary sky. I was not born or brought up under it, but under that of East Bengal, which was not ordinary either, only utterly different.

Our sky was a soft infinity rising from the earth to the unknown and the unknowable in equally soft steps. Nearest to us were the clouds, never resting, never in one place, never of one colour, never of one tone. At sunrise and sunset our minds could soar up through their pile on pile, and layer on layer, of yellow, gold, orange, red, pink, and grey to the blue spaces beyond, and our child-mind did go up. The blue, too, was of the softest—not even K'ang-Hsi blue was softer—and it seemed to be the colour of space condensed into mist. At night we could see stereoscopic distances and depths within it, regions after regions of the planets, of the galactic stars, of the star-clouds of extra-galactic systems, without end from galaxy to galaxy, and never offering any friction to the mind in its ascent to the stellar universe. The wonder with which all of us are born could never die under that sky.

But nowadays I live in the Aryavarta, in the Brahmarshi Desa itself, where the tender sky of my boyhood is a hard dome of blue-black porphyry. On it the stars are set like diamonds, flashing and cutting at the same time. This sky seems to cry out in the voice of the modern physicist—'The universe is finite, the universe is finite . . .,' and all our love of the far-off, all our yearnings for the infinite come rebounding from it like radio waves from the ionosphere.

Under that sky, when it was dark in ancient Aryavarta, men and women gave themselves up to the same act—natural, compulsive, uniform; yet each couple thought that they were as archetypal as Adam and Eve, and their passion as fresh as the first asphodel which blossomed in the Isles of the Blest. But that sky saw them differently, with other eyes. To it they were only one double-cell among millions, rolled round in earth's nocturnal course with rocks, and stones, and trees.

Yet that rejection could not be accepted, for the earth below was worse. The harking forward to the stars was natural in the Aryan in India, and he would rise to them

until his spirit was broken. The stark environment called for a matching starkness in all the responses, and most of all in the fleshly. The carnal had to be rooted in the elemental in order to give it sap, prevent it from withering. Also, his earthly home was so squalid that he could breathe freely in every sense—spiritual, emotional, and even physical, only in vast cosmic spaces. Therefore, even from that exquisite bed on the roof, perfumed with jasmine, allogach,* musk, and sandal, in which it was the easiest thing to raise the ghosts of all the flowers, and possible, too, for the few moments of forgetfulness granted to the senses to make life self-sufficient, sexual intercourse had to fly away to the awesome dark nebulae. It was a megalomanical gesture to save coitus from its burning anticipation, exhausting fulfilment, and corroding aftermath on that merciless plain. And in the less unhappy days of our Hindu existence, when men and women had some strength left to defy their environment, they were able to break even through that sky to the stars. But it was a flight which was very different from our floating up to the stellar world in East Bengal.

Men do not have such strength for ever, nor can they live at such heights for long. Thus it happened that in the pursuit of sensual enjoyments the Hindus began quite early to slide down an inclined plane, the main factor in it being the exhaustion of vitality in the tropical environment. Nevertheless, in their independent existence, even the lowest descent of the Hindus remained well above their later and present level. I wish to describe the older decline, but here too I shall be frank with my readers about the nature of the evidence.

The sexual life of the epic and the classical age can not only be contrasted with each other, the two can also be placed in a chronological sequence. No such order can be established with confidence in regard to the different sexual attitudes which are revealed in later Sanskrit

* Aloe of the Bible; *aguru* in Sanskrit.

literature. That is due mainly to the impossibility of dating early Sanskrit books with any degree of certainty. The kind of evidence on which this is usually done would not have passed muster in any other field of historical inquiry. Even the date of the greatest Sanskrit poet, Kalidasa, remains wholly speculative.

Therefore it could have happened that the qualitative distinctions which are found within the wide range of sexual attitudes and practices recorded in Sanskrit literature were really contemporaneous, instead of being consecutive. They could have existed side by side at the same time, though only among different groups, some high, some low, culturally. But I would also say that, given the known sequences in the sexual life and ideas of mankind in general, the types of behaviour could also have followed one another in time. There is a fair amount of probability that the attitudes I am going to illustrate constitute a historical series. If this is disputed, I shall say that I present my sequence as an ideal course of evolution, like the types of human soul described by Plato, with a claim that the ideal might also have been to some extent real.

Another caution I should like my readers to bear in mind is that my account is almost wholly based on literary evidence. Literature, it will perhaps be said, pictures an imagined, conventional, or even stylized life, distorted out of recognition as much by realism (fashionable) as by idealism (unfashionable). No doubt this is true up to a point, and every social historian who makes use of data provided by literature has to keep the risk in mind. But this objection would have had more force for me if my purpose were to describe the actual practice, instead of attitudes, aspirations, and ideals. For what I want to do literature can furnish dependable information.

Besides, I do not admit that even for the strict ends of social history it is not one of the legitimate sources. No good literature can be written, and in any case no literary

work can come alive without being anchored in reality and without embodying at least the substance of an actual state. If it were not and did not, it would lose all verisimilitude and appeal, and become ineffectual. Max Beerbohm, to my thinking, was absolutely right in claiming that his *Zuleika Dobson* reflected an Oxford which was very real at a particular point of time. Besides, to what else can one go for evidence as to the spirit of a society or age? Anyhow, it is my conviction that classical Sanskrit literature, especially the works from its golden age and partly also of the silver age, enshrine not only ideals, but also a large portion of the practices. The sophistication, urbanity, and insight which one meets in it, could not have been present without contact with a concrete way of life as lived.

I think this is enough in the way of a methodological plea, and I can now set down what I have to say. I have already made it clear that the romanticizing of sexual life was the counterthesis presented by the classical age of Hindu civilization against the thesis of the Vedic and the epic age. I have also described what might be looked upon as the cosmic form of this romantic approach. The normal form of the romanticization was, however, more human, but it also had an irresistible fervour, graciousness, and *douceur*. The Hindus succeeded in creating a *courtoisie*, as it were, of the sex act, and, if I might coin the word, also a troubadourism, with pretty conceits, and gestures, and symbols. Incapable of transcending the flesh, they showed their ingenuity in etherealizing it.

For this reason Sanskrit erotic writing is utterly different from any other erotic writing I have read, and I have read some. Many things considered natural in this genre are not only absent in Sanskrit, but are not even permissible. It could have no facetiae, ribald or euphemistic. It affected no disguise, but, on the other hand, would not refer to physical details. For instance, it could not contain any allusion to the genitalia, especially to the

male organ. Nothing is condemned more emphatically as obscene in Sanskrit rhetoric than the evocation of any imagery that could suggest intromission. It was not the description of sexual intercourse as such but these things which were branded as obscene by the Hindus. The secondary sexual characters, therefore, played a large part in the Hindu erotic imagery, but even then the emphasis was mostly on the sensations. In respect of behaviour, again, much delicacy-cum-restraint was enforced. Neither the men nor the women could indulge in coarseness of speech. Women, more especially, were never made to utter a single word which could be felt as gross, and *putinrie* was wholly out of the question. Lastly, the general attitude on the part of the men had to be chivalric, and on that of the women tender. By no stretch of pruriency could such writing, burning as it was, be called pornography.

When I consider the grossness, the coarse priapism, of erotic writings elsewhere, especially in Arabic literature, I am astonished by the Hindu refinement. In regard to speech or sound the women were neither made nor expected to pass beyond the involuntary *sonitas in coitu,* as naturally sweet as bird-song is, and a few modest exclamations signifying fear, pleasure, resistance, surrender, wish for release, or sense of fulfilment. That was to be the maximum of self-assertion, which could be strengthened by passion, but only at its most refined. I shall illustrate this by quoting a lyric which indicates how a woman could give expression to her lingering desire without resorting to solicitation which was considered highly indelicate.

Svamin! bhamguraya'lakam,
satilakam bhalam, Vilasin! kuru;
Pranesa! trutitam payodhara-tate
haram punar'yojaya.'—
Ityukta surata'vasana-samaye
sampurna-chandra'nana,

Sprista tena tath'aiva
jata-pulaka prapta punar'mohanam.

This stanza is also in the nineteen-syllabled Atidhriti metre, and in the following rendering I attempt to imitate it:

Husband mine! tie this loosen'd hair;
its vermeil, to the brow, my dalliance! give;
And this chaplet broken, sweetheart!
string anew, to place aslant the swell of breasts.—
The fair one, ev'n as moonlight fair,
said this, in her coitus ebbing to a close;
And by him touched—there, there, and there,
tingling, trembling, in a swoon she sank again.

But even with amorous behaviour so delicately regulated, our young women in ancient times had to be very careful in order to avoid contingent awkwardness. For one thing, a person who, willy nilly in her passion, but just crossed the line of the permissible in being forward, was likely to be twitted the next morning by eavesdropping friends. Here is an example of the twitting:

Dhanya'si ya kathayasi priya-samgame'pi,
Visravdha-chatuka-satani rata'ntaresu!
Nivim prati pranihite tu kare priyena,
Sakhyah! sapami yadi kimchid'api smarami!

I give a literal translation, reproducing as far as possible the metre of the original, which is Vasanta-tilaka:

Blessèd you! who can prattle so,
when with your love you lie;
A hundred pretty-things, cooly,
even in coitus croon!
To this girdle, should my dearest
no more than stretch a hand,
O friends! Swear I, to you swear I,
if I remember aught.

This ravishing little hypocrite could perhaps be silenced by a slap, but there could be no silencing at all of another set of scandal-mongers. The Hindus in the olden days were very fond of keeping talking birds like parrots, mynahs, and grackles, and these learned to imitate the sounds, listening to them night after night. So, in the daytime, before solemn and elderly visitors or relatives, the birds would show off their power of mimicry by mixing up the names and praise of gods and goddesses which they had been taught, with the dubious interjections they had themselves learnt, which, of course, was most embarrassing.

On account of their romantic approach to the physical aspect of sex relations Hindu poets and story-writers would have considered a book like *Lady Chatterley's Lover* outrageously low, and there can be no doubt that *so it is*. The trouble with D. H. Lawrence was that he was a literary genius from the most vapid and insignificant class of human beings which so far has been evolved in history, namely, the modern urban lower middle-class of the West. Next, intuition and not intellect being his forte, he could never perceive when he was being driven by his genius and when by his itch to rebel in a very lower middle-class manner. Besides, men from this class have a natural grievance against women of rank. The more positive of them are, on the one hand, bored or repelled by the flat taste of their own women; and, on the other, titillated by the air and pride of flesh of aristocratic women. But since they cannot go anywhere near the women who so excite them, they outrage their modesty in print, imagining themselves in the position of the outrager. They satisfy a double passion: lust and class-hatred.

It needs considerable discipline of the mind, and also moorings in a great cultural tradition, to be able to write erotic books which are acceptable to a civilized society, and which a civilized person can read without feeling a *sale bete* all the time. It is not for the *canaille ecri-*

vante to write erotic poems and stories. Even smut, pure and simple, sits more naturally, and with less harmful consequences for the perpetrator, on an aristocrat than a plebeian. Note the case of Petronius, Arbiter of Elegance.

I should only like to add that I have not been contemptuous of D. H. Lawrence's unfortunate stumbling without knowing a little of what pseudo-smart and pseudo-modern critics have written about it recently. I have hardly ever read anything which is more irrelevant to a particular issue. But perhaps I have to be reconciled to the fact that the Western literary world is being invaded more and more by careerists, not chance geniuses, from the lower middle-class.

It is virtually impossible for a man of this type to write about sex powerfully, simply, honourably. So I can understand, and even be resigned to their earning money by publishing dirty sociology and dull eroticism, but I cannot admit their claim to illuminate the grandeur and misery of sexual life. In this line the ancient Hindu certainly did better than most people. Here is another digression to apologize for, but I brought it in to convey the feel of Hindu eroticism by placing it by the side of something familiar to some Western readers.

It will have been noticed that in all this Hindu romanticizing, the woman's is the more transfigured role. This is the natural gravitation of the sex-relationship, in which man's lust is the woman's burden. It is always proclaimed that she is its victim, but few have said that she is also its redeemer. For the Hindu also, before he became a living corpse, she was that, though in the only way in which he understood redemption of the flesh.

In addition, she had to be something even more important: not simply the transformer, but the very preserver of desire. There is nothing which is more prone and quick to run to seed than man's lust. He discovers soon enough that though without action lust is perjured,

in action it is the expense of the spirit in a waste of shame. It is all a realization of the sad refrain:

> Enjoy'd no sooner but despised straight;
> Past reason hunted; and no sooner had,
> Past reason hated . . .

The Hindu felt this paradox no less than the Elizabethan, perhaps he felt it even more strongly, with greater fear. Yet his method of dealing with it was different not only from the post-Renaissance European's, but also the ancient Greek's. There is a passage in Plato, in which he gives an example of release from the sexual desire, that tyrant which is homicidal and suicidal at the same time. Cephalus is reported to have asked Sophocles in old age whether he still sought the pleasures of itercourse and was capable of it. Hush, replied the poet, my greatest joy is to have escaped from that fierce and savage master.

No Hindu would have called that joy. In his revulsion from sexual enjoyment he was capable of some very tortured psychological and physiological acrobatics, but to have complete freedom was the last thing he cared for, because to give up lust was for him to turn his back on life itself. So, even when he abandoned the world, his abnegation did not exclude an insidious and disguised lust. A peeping, pricking, tormenting naughty little thing had to keep up even the sadhu's faith in spirituality.

The Hindu in the world would have none of this subterfuge, he would hold fast to lust openly, and would keep it enjoyable. So, when he saw that it would head inevitably for senility and exhaustion if left to itself, he tried, with a sure instinct for life so long as he had it, to keep lust fresh and strong by idealizing the woman's part in it. It was like old David taking Abishag the Shunammite to his bosom. Woman is the eternal Abishag of ancient Hindu lust.

That accounts for the extraordinary fascination, amounting almost to infatuation, that the ancient

Hindus felt for coitus in the reversed position, i.e. with the woman as active partner, which they called *purusha-yita* or *viparita rati*. All Sanskrit erotic poetry is full of the theme, and dwells on it with an amazing zest and tenderness. In this the Hindus stand in utter contrast to the Muslims. The latter attributed the most shameless and assertive lust to women, yet in Muslim erotic writings there is hardly any emphasizing or even reference to this role. The popular Muslim belief is that if conception takes place in this position the child is born squint-eyed. But the Muslim certainly was not deterred by this fear. In any case, squints are not more common among the Hindus than among the Muslims. To my thinking, the Muslim aversion came from a more fundamental source, a specific concept of virility. He must have felt that he had to ride and control the wild lust he attributed to his womenfolk just as he took pride in breaking his wild Arab horses. He could not allow the instrument of his pleasure to become its mistress, which for him would have been like being thrown off his mount.

The Hindus, on the other hand, were frightened by the idea of naked lust in women, and even when they knew that it existed up to a point, they tried desperately to turn the blind eye to it. Furthermore, they actually looked up to the woman to rescue their lust from its creeping paralysis. Therefore they would beg the woman's desire as a favour, with grace and humility. There was in this Hindu begging something of the gallantry of the knight kneeling at the feet of his lady-love. Even when in the eighteenth century the old Hindu erotic tradition had become coarsened, a Bengali poet in a very famous poem made out of the pleading, a witty and tender argument between a prince and a princess.

But it should also be obvious that the Hindu man's clinging dependence on the woman imposed too great a burden on her, and in the end it proved too heavy. In Sanskrit literature the fatigue of coitus is an ever-present

accompaniment to the feminine existence, sometimes as painful as travail, and in any case more continuous. Nevertheless, in the earlier ages, when chivalry and tenderness had not died in the Hindu, the burden was not as crushing as it finally became. It only charged things quotidian with the heaviness of para-erotic languor, and changed the day almost into a penumbra of the night. I might add that even now it is not easy to rouse young Hindu married women to any kind of liveliness in the morning; it is a listless waking for them until they sink into their siesta. They want to sleep as long as they can, and like the great cats are stirred to full animation only with the keen winds and falling shades of the evening.

But as time passed and the relentless climate wore away the capacity for delicate enjoyment among the Hindus, the strain on the women became worse and worse, and they were almost driven against the wall. The pain and fatigue became a constant smart, and the para-erotic languour was transformed into para-erotic smouldering. This curious transformation had, of course, its prototype in personal life. In fact, the evolution of the collective sexual life of the Hindus may be said to have reproduced the course of sexual life of an individual couple.

This is quite circumstantially described in Sanskrit literature. Hindu ethics and chivalry in regard to sexual intercourse made it obligatory for a husband to be extremely considerate to the young wife, who, of course, in that age was never an unresponsive child wife, and also to be respectful of her physical and mental delicacy. For instance, she was to be gradually reconciled to exposure. A bashful young wife would throw a handful of incense into the lamp and put it out, filling the room with the fragrance of her passion but extinguishing its light. Scratching and biting, which are almost as instinctive and severe in Hindu sexual intercourse as they are in the feline, had therefore to be completely eschewed

at the beginning. So, Kalidasa relates that when Parvati was newly married to Siva he spared her these, and Parvati's mother felt infinitely happy to see her daughter beaming from the joy of scratchless and biteless coitus. But as married life advanced, sensibility declined and violence increased. This personal trend was recapitulated in collective life.

The later strain on the women may be said to be epitomized in one aspect of the regimen the women had to follow: namely, assuaging the physical pain of the violent caresses. (Another proof of the foolishness of those who say or believe that the Hindus practise Gandhian non-violence.) They massaged each other, rubbing the wounds with nard and oil.* Virtually, the whole day was spent in trying to recuperate from the previous night for the coming night, and even so by sunset there was only half-recuperation, because they were not made of stone.

In trying to relieve the physical pain they brought on a different kind of ache. As they saw their wounds they were again roused, and even when they were too tired to be psychologically stirred they were physiologically excited. So, seeing the relentless fury always treading on their heels, they fell on each other's shoulder, and cried:

'If thou wilt *ease* thine heart
Of lust and all its smart,
Then sleep, dear, sleep. . . .'

'Yes, yes,' the other would sob:

'But wilt thou *cure* thine heart
Of lust and all its smart,
Then die, dear, die.'

* I have before me a bottle of Yardley's lavender and a little home-made nard (*nalada* in Sanskrit), prepared from the fibrous roots of the Himalayan plant *Nardostachys jatamansi*. If human passions could be said to have their equivalents in smell, the one as truly wafts the fragrance of European love (pre-decadence), as the other does of the Hindu (equally pre-decadence) —*Amor sacro e Amor profano*, both carnal though.

But sleep was not to be commanded, and life was too high a price to pay even for release from lust. So these women sat like Baudelaire's damned women:

Comme un bétail pensif sur le sable couchées,
Elles tournent leurs yeux vers l'horizon des mers,
Et leurs pieds se cherchant et leurs mains rapprocheés
Ont de douces langeurs et des frissons amers.

Seeing them thus, do you not, reader, feel like saying to them as I do?

Vous que dans votre enfer mon âme a poursuivies,
Pauvres sœurs, je vous aime autant que je vous plains,
Pour vos mornes douleurs, vos soifs inassouvies,
Et les urnes d'amour dont vos grands cœurs sont pleins!

The Hindu, by killing the woman's response also killed the woman's mercy, and his sexual life took a new turn. Anyone in his position, living in a world where the natural affections had not been withered by a cruel climate and the suffering inflicted by it, would have tried in bitter remorse. Not so the Hindu.

In the first place, he did not understand what it was that was making an extremist of him by steadily attenuating his sensibility. Still less was he able to see that the remedy for the growing insensibility was not to increase the dosage of pleasure but to reduce it. So, he pushed on, as a dipsomaniac goes from wine to spirits, from spirits to a mixture of spirits and opinion, and finally even to methylated spirit.

Next, he turned into an impossible egotist and forgot that a man gets from fellow men, women, and life itself, not what he demands, but only a part of what he himself is ready to give in the way of love. 'From every man according to his capacity and to every man according to his need' is not a promise which was ever held out by the God of Love, and let us be thankful for that. But the Hindu, baulked in his sensual appetite and brooding on

his deprivation, became capable of any selfishness. Driven by a sense of injury, he drifted into a current of anti-romance in sexual life. This in the end was to carry him to the Stygian pools.

The anti-romantic movement may be regarded as the third stage of the sexual life of the Hindus. But before describing it I should like to say a few words about what some at least of the women had to show when attacked by the self-seeking lust of their menfolk. It would be a mistake to think that all Hindu women acquiesced in the torture inflicted on them. Some took their revenge and sold their bodies dear, indeed far dearer than the most rapacious harpy in a brothel. If I were to speak about the price they extracted it would send a shiver through those who are given to deploring what man has made of man.

I must explain, however, that I have no evidence for this from ancient times, except some hints that the moneyless husband's was a hard lot. It is only the later Hindu moralists, especially the great popular preachers, who first gave a clear indication that the whip hand was passing from the man to the woman. I am not sure where I read it, to my recollection it is in Tulsidas, but the saying at all events is there, and it is a terrifying saying: 'The charmer of the night is the tigress of the day, and yet every home has its pet tigress.'

The moralists must already have seen something like what I have been observing in Hindu married life since my boyhood. It would be grossly unfair to the women as well as to Hindu society to say that this state of affairs was or is general, but still it was and is widespread enough to constitute a serious moral situation. Whatever may have happened in Eden, here in any case women did bring about the fall of man. Let me set down only the main counts of the degradation.

First, after a certain age an extraordinary heartlessness began to appear in married life, which seems all the more extraordinary when one recalls the affection between a

Hindu man and wife in ancient times. I was hardly twelve years old when my brother came to me one day with Palgrave's *Children's Treasury of Lyrical Poetry* and read out 'John Anderson, my jo, John . . .' by Burns. Reciting and hearing it we nearly split with laughing, for we took it as a humorous poem. Its mellow tenderness was bound to escape us, for in our society whenever we saw a wife-conscious elderly man we asked in a malicious and gleeful undertone if she was the 'second party' (*dvitiya*), and felt more delighted if somebody informed us that she was really the third (*tritiya paksha*). It was considered most unbecoming, if not actually indecorous, to keep a corner for even a faded wraith of affection towards the wife of youth in the wrong half of married life.

In fact, the situation was much more *brutal* in the French sense. Even as a boy I could detect in ageing women, who had not been released from the mood by widowhood, not only indifference to the life's partner, but almost passive hatred. The women threw about taunts, slighting remarks, and even darker innuendoes not fully understood by us when speaking of their husbands. Had we not been quite used to this kind of talk we should have been shocked. Yet in their nightly bed the two, who felt almost a loathing for each other, would oblige the respective bodies from the prickings of the most desiccated lust, and hate each other all the more for it. Throughout married life the drying up of the lust without its atrophy, and the growth of the repulsion marched step in step.

Secondly, no overseer in a galley could be more ruthless in making the wretched slaves row than these women were in prodding their husbands to earn money. The relentless sharpness of the tongues always lashed the unemployed husbands, and the home was no place for them. They trudged all day long in search of employment, and felt happy to think that they had still one recreation left. But the overseer's whip was not hung up when after securing employment they began to

earn. They were expected to earn more and more, and most emphatically they were not encouraged to think that the money earned, or that even a part of it was theirs. Hindu society never arrived at the financial agreement that is usual between husbands and wives in the West. Among us financial power is concentrated, and so it is either wholly in the woman's hand or in the man's. In the homes of the salaried class the woman is normally the controller, and the higher the salary the more absolute is the control.

But economic servitude, of which so much is made in these days except when it is the husband's, is not the worst conceivable degradation for a modern Hindu husband. The moral degradation was and is infinitely worse. Very early in married life the wife begins to trample on all the ideals and idealistic activities of the husband, and his books, more especially, are looked upon as if they were so many mothers-in-law. Every delicate sensibility is pricked into a wound and kept festering.

Last of all, any generous impulse or kindliness in a husband is considered almost as a sin against the marriage vow. He is not to help a mother, brother, or sister in distress, and the more capable he is to help the less will he be allowed to do so. Before he decides to send money to a needy relative, the man has to brace himself up to meet a she-bear deprived of her whelps. So those who cannot wholly forget that blood is thicker than water or law, often take recourse to tortuous subterfuges to help their relatives. I often notice a sort of besotted torpor on the faces of elderly Hindus who are doing well in life. At one time I attributed it wholly to the knout of the domestic Tartar, but now I think that it is partly due to the curses of unhappy mothers, brothers, and sisters.

When my feelings were still insufficiently trained, and when my irritation at particular experiences had not merged in a general sense of the tragedy of our people, I used to say impatiently that there were few among

my friends and acquaintances who had not been degraded by their wives. I no longer do so, because I can see that the wives who suffer in mute despair form the majority of the women. I would even put in a word for the women who give the painful impression of sordidness I have described. Though they seem to have a perverse determination to make their fight mercenary and would appear even to be ashamed to admit any other motive, actually they are driven not so much by avarice as revengefulness. Unable to protect themselves in their bodies, they assert their power in a different way.

Let me, however, revert to the story of the sexual life of the Hindus in ancient times. In the golden age of his civilization the Hindu adored and worshipped the naked body of his sweetheart as we today, standing before a Giorgione, Tintoretto, or Titian, worship and adore their nudes in every curve and swell, though with less personal interest. However, in the Hindu experience there was another important difference besides the absence of detachment: the soft flesh suddenly stepped down from the canvas of that open and veracious world, itself surrendered, and exacted surrender from the man, in such a clasp as sent a stream of hot lust coursing through the blood; yes, lust—but so transformed by its own fire that no Hindu felt ashamed to recall it even when he held the body of his dead love in an agonized embrace before she was torn away from him to be burnt on a pyre.

This Hindu lust was to die, it died, and the greatest poet of ancient India, in his famous lamentation of the goddess Rati for her dead husband, seems to have written an elegy not on the death of a lover only, but of Hindu lust itself:

Gata eva na te nivartate, sa sakha
dipa iva'nilahatah;
Aham'asya das'eva pasya,
mam'avisahya-vyasanena dhumitam!

He is gone, gone from you, not to return—
that friend, even as a lamp by gusts blown out;
See me like him, my plight is just the same—
smoking, burning, in unendurable pain.

But a vacuum is impossible to maintain and therefore, when he became incapable of experiencing lust in its old ennobling intensity, the Hindu stooped to amorous adventures of the kind sought, not even by Don Juan, but by Casanova. No doubt that too was *vie amoureuse*, but of a rottenness which could not be masked by the mincing preciosity of the words.

I have my images for the sexual life of the Hindus and its successive phases. Down to the epic age from the Vedic, we see an honest wood-fire, crackling, leaping, blazing: very homely, and yet redolent with the smell of burning pine logs. But in the age which followed, that of classical Hindu attitudes, a benevolent but erratic daimon threw a handful of magnesium into that yellow fire, to change the flames into a dazzling, blinding, and cascading mass of white light. Then it went out, and what was left behind were beds of dirty red cinders, smouldering and hissing, and there clung to them an obstinate odour of burnt flesh and hair which always lingers in the atmosphere of our burning ghats or crematoriums, which, of course, are open. It was a world of death, in which fire itself was death. An adventure which had started as an act of generation was ending as an act of dying.

In the anti-romantic or rather realistic phase of Hindu sexual life the first expedient to be adopted for keeping enjoyment alive was the variation of object, a step quite natural in those who lose the capacity to renovate it from the springs of life. In ancient India there were two institutions within which a man could satisfy his desire for variety in sexual matters without straying out of the four corners of respectability. These were polygamy and prostitution. Each was a sure standby. But their very dependability made them slightly insipid. In addi-

tion, both had positive disadvantages. Two or more wives meant so many more tyrants, and their rivalries and quarrels more than cancelled the gain in diversity. There is a well-known Bengali story in which the emulation between the two wives of an old man is illustrated by a vivid example: the elder wife plucked out two black hairs for *every* white one pulled out by the favourite younger one.

As to the prostitutes, whom in deference to their position and prestige in ancient India I should call courtesans, they were formidable persons, besides being expensive. Some were so majestic that to have a liaison with any of them was like being a lover of the imperious Virgin Queen or Empress Catherine the Great, and having to pay for it into the bargain.

Thus, in their different ways, the wives as well as the courtesans were far too institutional for those who sought adventure and piquancy. Naturally, the choice came to be restricted to one—the neighbour's wife or *parakiya*, 'belonging to the other fellow', as she was called in Sanskrit. Behind her, on the lower bed—if I might coin a parallel to the phrase 'lower table'—were the 'ancilla-cohort', maid-servants and working women of all sorts who were always available for incidental novelty. The devotion to the handmaiden, as everybody knows, existed at the time of Agamemnon. It certainly did so even before him, as it has also continued down the ages. In addition to these, the neighbour's daughter was sometimes aimed at, but ancient Hindu society had its scruples in this respect and such adventures had to end in matrimony, which rather dampened the enthusiasm of those who were out for adventure only.

The gay dogs had to be on the look-out for an accessible person—the *sadhya*, as she was elegantly described in Sanskrit, which meant exactly what the English word 'practicable' does. The amateur of intrigues was called upon to develop *le sens du praticable* as thoroughly as any military commander. He observed the signs keenly. One

of these, a mild one, was the frequent appearance of a woman at the window. A more positive one was to be noted if a girl took a flower from her hair and threw it at a pair of billing-and-cooing pigeons. A third and rather conclusive sign was recognized when in the course of a ramble in a wood or park a man noticed his companion look innocently but fixedly into the water of a clear pool, and, following her gaze, saw a frog-couple in tight embrace. There was a whole cue-sheet of similar indications, and it was by these that a man had to feel his way forward cautiously and intelligently.

The lover pursued his quest at two levels—that of an 'affair' and of an 'incident'. Now, those who have read Boswell's *London Journal* will recall that the scamp was on the look-out for an affair just after coming to London, but for some time had to make shift with incidents, which were frankly recognized as coarse even by him. The Hindu, on the other hand, preferred incidents to affairs, especially if the latter had to be sustained to the point of boredom. So, the maidservant sent with a letter of assignation often came back in such a condition that the lady in question could plainly see that her lover had inverted the proverb into 'Like mistress, like maid'. But she always had the good sense to remain satisfied with giving a sound rating to the maid, and shrugging her shoulders at the real offender. It was a world in which 'cheat', 'liar', 'hypocrite', or 'rogue' had become terms of endearment for a lover. The Western reader will be reminded by all this of the society of Ovid or of the Restoration comedy. But the Hindu world was much more light-hearted.

That might be called its saving grace. There was no loophole whatever in it for tragedy, no question of any betrayal of innocence. There was no need in it for any lovely woman to die after stooping to folly, in order to make the lover repent. Everybody concerned understood the game, knew its rules, and played it fairly. In it defeat and victory were taken with grace, in a sportsmanlike spirit. This was having the satisfaction of seeing that wild

beast, lust, put in a zoo like Whipsnade, and the old Hindu order was too blasé, too weary, and too worldly to mind a little unavoidable sexual subpromiscuity.

The second expedient which the Hindus tried was the variation in method, that is, those elaborations of posture and movement in which the outside world has shown and is showing a quite unnecessary interest, an interest which has not done anybody any good, nor will. This expedient, too, is natural in those who have lost vitality, and it cannot also be denied that recourse to it, to the tricks devised by it, can give a certain kind of satisfaction to certain people in certain states of mind. After all, it has to be admitted that sexual intercourse is a psychological experience founded on a muscular and neural event. But here also is a mistake and diversion, and a very apt example of being thrown off the real scent by the red herring.

The analogy on which the mind worked in hitting upon these methods should be plain. It was offered by those pastimes which depend on muscular or neural virtuosity, and a combination of both, for instance, wrestling, boxing, or fencing, and if nothing more was wanted than sensations, especially sensations with a neural backwash, these trivialities promised something. But sexual intercourse is not and cannot be the same thing as boxing or wrestling. Curiously enough, as a purely physical pleasure, it cannot be transformed and has not been transformed as eating has been into gastronomy. On the contrary, once the act is reduced to a means of mere physical satisfaction, it becomes a paradoxical combination of atrophy in one direction and hypertrophy in another. As a resource of happiness—and a canting hypocrite alone will deny that sexual intercourse can and should be treated as a means of happiness (note that I say *happiness*, not *pleasure*) it becomes completely sterile; and, on the other hand, as a drug habit among many drug habits, it shows an almost uncheckable capacity for increase. That this particular drug habit is widespread does not make it anything better than a drug habit.

In the first place, it creates its meaningless amplification and motive power, which become a *perpetuum mobile*, creating an intolerable strain without satisfaction. In any case it forges its unbreakable fetters, and what is even worse creates its own disease. Whether smoking is or is not a cause of cancer may still be a subject of dispute, but there can be no room for doubt that the sexual drug habit brings on its own cancer, which is something like a dry rot of life. There is only one formula for remaining immune to it: *Du cœur, encore du cœur, tonjours du cœur*: two hearts, which makes it all the more difficult. As to cure of a sort, there is only one—and even that for only a very strong-minded person: to break the enslavement by shrugging one's shoulders and treating the prick as a periodic impulse to defaecate—a dreary remedy, but perhaps better than the drug habit.

It did not take the Hindus a long time after the full development of their civilization to reach this barren phase, and they also took the path which could only lead to still greater barrenness. Out of this waste of sexual aberration and false appetite there arose in course of time their equally barren and repulsive correlative—the sex-obsessed chastity of the Hindu, which is perhaps the most despicable ethical notion ever created in the moral evolution of any people. The only thing which may be said for the worldly Hindu in the barren and heartless cycle of sexual enjoyment is that even at his worst he did not have any opinion of the most degraded form of sexual perversity, homosexuality. I cannot understand how after St Paul in Romans (Ch. I, 26-28) the Western world, which professes to have a Christian civilization, can have second thoughts on this subject. The Hindus at least did not have them. Though homosexuality was not absent among them, they had still enough instinct of life left to treat it as a fraud.*

* I have heard intelligent Europeans who personally would never dream of being homosexual but live in fear of contemporary ideas, defending homosexuality in the name of aesthetic

This is the world of Hindu sexual realism which is partly reflected in the Sanskrit erotic manuals and pornographic books. The two overlap, but they do not coincide. It must never be imagined that any real existence, however decayed, can be identical with the picture presented in this literature. The naïveté with which it is nowadays taken, a naïveté which certainly is not without its hidden motive, compels me to give the warning that there is no greater mistake than to think that the absurd systematization, heartless elaboration, and crude sensationism of the Hindu erotic manuals correspond to anything possible in real life. It is only a set of men who had become completely dead to life who could have prescribed modes of kissing, embracing, copulating, *et cetera*, in exact multiples of four. I have read and heard clever but unintelligent Hindus bragging that in order to practise sexual intercourse *à la Kamasutra* a man has to develop a body of steel. It should have occurred to these superlatively smart intellectuals that men who have bodies of steel do not stand in need of the sexual satisfaction.

The Western reaction to these books irritates me in my serious moods, and amuses me in my cynical. Till recently they provoked a dolorous and peevish moral cackle except in crochety circles. Nowadays, in contrast, they

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freedom, as a matter of personal taste without any moral implication. Admitting only for the sake of argument that so denatured an urge can be called taste, I reply that if an activity which is fundamentally biological has acquired aesthetic values these latter can no more be made independent of the basic function than a biological necessity, such as sexual intercourse or meat-eating, can be branded as immoral because some cranks have proclaimed the independence of morality on biology. In any case, history has once proclaimed its verdict. The winner in the old controversy about homosexuality was not the 'fashionable' Roman or Greek, but the 'unfashionable' St Paul—a case of truth having been denied to the 'wise' but revealed to 'babes'. Also, a Roman, in spite of his personal obscurity and gross indecency of language, has survived as a poet because his heart was in the right place: among other things, he ferociously denounced homosexuality. His name is Juvenal.

constitute one of the titles of the Hindus to the reverence of the world, at least in 'psychologically' exalted coteries. If the new admirers could meet the old denunciators there would be an argument worth hearing, yet neither would like me to say that the quarrel notwithstanding, there is an unseen bond between the two—a secret lecherous interest, sheepish in one case and puppyish in another. I am not one of those Anglicized Hindus who would take the new Western appreciation of our erotic manuals as a compliment, and if I had anything to do with the matter I would certainly not have provided air transport to Khajuraho, which, among the other evils it has brought into existence, is responsible for a continual insult to these sculptures. It was an evil day for them when the Frenchman Burnier was allowed to photograph them, and throw a veil of art on the iconography of Hindu lust.

As I see the matter, the new attitude is another expression of the tag—*ex Oriente lux*, and behind it stands an urge which is a doublet of the inclination to seek spiritual enlightenment in India just as the exhausted spirituality of the West is prompting some misled and partly foolish Westerners to come to India in order to renovate it from Hindu springs, in the same way the exhausted fleshly vitality is turning to India in the hope that it will be rejuvenated by Hindu sexual life. For me, both the sets of seekers, the Vedantizing Occidentals and Kamasutrazing Occidentals, stand in the same limbo. I can hardly say how strongly I felt when I heard as a young man that the German writer on sexual psychology, Magnus Hirschfeldt, had come to India to collect material for his researches. His collection was afterwards burnt by the Nazis, and that was the only act of the Nazis with which I found myself in some sort of tune. I sympathized with Dr Hirschfeldt, but I could not regard him as a better scientist than the mediaeval alchemists. The seekers of spiritual enlightenment in India do not know that the Hindus do not even possess a word of their own for spirituality, and the seekers of sexual potency do not know that

the greatest shadow that hangs over the very private life of modern Hindus is the fear of impotence of all kinds.

Judging by the practical effect of this new admiration I have an even stronger grouse against those who are its preachers. Their admiration of the supposed superior sexual knowledge and dexterity of the Hindus is putting ideas in the heads of a particularly depraved set of Occidentals, who are coming to India and working havoc with what sexual sanity or even virtue of necessity we still have left in us. One of these creatures was responsible, at least in part, for a long fast of purification by Mahatma Gandhi and the abandonment by him of the Sabarmati Ashram, and it does not call for much power of observation to recognize today foreigners of this type, whom unfortunately we cannot deport. But I pray that some day the rules of international travel will require inoculation for certain propensities and appetites as they do for cholera or yellow fever.

What do the Hindu erotic manuals then stand for? The answer is fairly simple. Partially, they were written to provide what might be described as adventitious aid, added impetus, and assisted take-off to people who were going out of the flowing river of sexual life into its dead waters, and could not discharge a biological function naturally. This literature, like many other artificial aids, is produced spontaneously at certain stages of all civilizations, but is to be regarded, none the less, as one of the diseases of civilization. It is an application of cerebration to a field where cerebration is not applicable.

Next, and that in my opinion is the main motivation, there is the desire for vicarious satisfaction for people who have no life left in them to extract satisfaction from the reality. There are, as is far too well known, many forms of vicarious satisfaction in matters of sex, and the most common is the traffic in verbal smut. There is also found, among elderly men especially, a frigid uncleanliness of mind which, if the man has the courage to be shameless, can take delight in the sexual experiences and aberrations

of young acquaintances. The more squeamish of these seek the same satisfaction at second-hand from books. There are also lecherous elderly men who wish to cure their wives of frigidity, or whet them to *putinrie* by reading out the books to them.

It is because, as a Hindu, I know a little of the barren and stony path down which we have travelled to an arid hell that I am both saddened and angered by the appearance of the same type of literature of adventitious aid in the West. When even an Anglican clergyman, writing presumably for churchmen and churchwomen, grows unctuous over such a subject I say that the hour has struck for calling a spade a spade: St Paul, thou hast been forgotten! Venus has always been called a perilous goddess, and in this chorus Dante and Swinburne have both joined. In her most degraded form she used to be euphemistically called *Vénus de carrefour*. But was any *Vénus de carrefour* so bad as the *Venus de paperasserie*, sister of the politics of *paperasserie?*

It must, however, be pointed out that behind all sophisticated sexual experience, living or dead, crisp or sapless, there always stood, and was bound to stand, a wholly natural and gross sphere of sexual activity. At the highest development of the civilization cultured Hindus invariably made a distinction between their own sexual pleasures and those of the common herd. The latter they regarded as rustic, and had they been more democratic they would probably have called them 'under-developed' and tried to develop them. But being, on the other hand, wholly undemocratic they called the rustic sexual life *gramya dharma* in Sanskrit, which means 'the ways or activities of villagers'. They even drew a line between what they called 'artistic sexual intercourse'—*chitra-rati*, and common sexual intercourse.

This rustic world never dies, and in one sense so much the better for mankind, for it is by this that human communities are saved from civilization. But the rustic sexual life, too, had two aspects in India as it has everywhere.

The first of these was direct satisfaction, and the other evocative satisfaction. The direct does not call for any explanation, but the evocative, even at that low level, had again two faces: a lascivious face in private and solitary reminiscence, and a ribald and clownish face in retrospect in company. The natural man has an invincible shyness in exposing his lasciviousness to any but the sharer, and he covers up its existence by stirring up a good deal of smoke and ashes in the way of jocose obscenity, as if he was unconsciously trying to divert the Evil Eye from his treasured fire. Thus, in regard to sex, the common man always appears more dirty than he really is.

At this point I have to take note of an expression of Hindu sexual life which has attracted a good deal of attention. I mean, of course, the erotic sculptures on the temple walls, and I sincerely wish less nonsense had been talked about them. In this case, as in most Hindu things, the most direct and natural explanation is the best. To put it briefly, this erotic sculpture takes its place in the entire gamut of sexual life just described, from the most romantic down to the most ribald and rustic. It is a great mistake to apply only *one* interpretative formula to this sculpture and to examine it, so to say, under *one* spotlight, because it is itself not one. It is equally wrong to try to explain it with the help of extraneous ideas, for the simple reason that it represents many, though not all the aspects of an activity which obeys no laws but its own.

I can see that it may be easy to distinguish the different levels of feeling in this sculpture, and that, in any case, it may be difficult to find the romance. But these difficulties are inherent in the understanding of all graphic representation of erotic themes. In literature the erotic mood is set going from a feeling, and the physical fact may or may not be made explicit. Even when it is, the reader's reaction can be controlled by the mood created by the writer. This psychological control of the erotic sensation lies in a large measure outside the power of the artist, because he has to begin with a visible fact, and

there are not many minds which can start at this point and go up to higher sensations or feelings. So, when a genuine romantic element is actually present in such works, it can be swamped by coarser sensations. Therefore erotic sculpture and painting, even when they aim to be genuine art and not mere pornography, appear to be far more crude than they really are.

This applies to Hindu erotic sculpture all the more forcefully because it is so frank and open, and he who would interpret it must be able to check the natural gravitation of the mind, so that he may respond to all the effects intended. These effects, as I have just indicated, comprise nearly the whole range of the sexual life of the Hindus as it had evolved down to the age of the sculptures.

I have also said that it is a self-contained artistic expression to which no external formula is applicable. In saying this I had and have specially in mind the religious formula, which in my opinion is wholly irrelevant to these sculptures. This does not mean, however, that the Hindus did not mix up sex and religion. They did, and I shall come to that presently. What I wish to make clear here is that, except in northern Buddhism and Tantricism, this mixture is not reflected in Hindu art. I think that the erotic sculptures in the temples of India proper, especially at Khajuraho and Konarak, have no religious significance and are to be regarded as works of art meant for decoration and ornament. I might add that even in northern Buddhism or Tantricism only the divine images in erotic postures have religious significance. By and large the erotic representations are profane.

I know, of course, that one of the reasons for which the interpreters fall back on the religious interpretation is that these representations are found on temple walls. But this association is itself based on a serious misunderstanding of the nature of the temple cult and image worship in Hinduism. Neither is known to Brahmanic Hinduism, which is Hinduism strictly so-called. No ancient

text refers to a temple, and it is no part of a Hindu's compulsory religious duties to go to a temple and worship an image. Both temples and images were taken over by the Hindus from the Greeks and adapted in their way.

The Hindus did not look upon the gods they worshipped in temples as divinities in the Christian or even Greek and Roman sense. These gods were supernatural kings, created in the image of earthly kings. The whole liturgy of worship in temples even now is ministration to the daily needs and daily life of a king. He holds his *lever*, bathes, dresses, eats, sleeps, gives audience, hears petitions and praise, looks on dances, has amusements, and even goes out on excursions. The erotic sculptures are only ancillary to this routine and pageant, for the royal palaces contained these. Why should not a divine king have them?

Moreover, the word *mandira*, which is the commonest word for a temple in Sanskrit and the modern Indian languages, originally had no sacred association whatever: it simply meant a house, a room, or even anything that could figuratively be taken for a house or room. The exact sense was conveyed by adding a prefix to the simple *mandira*. For instance, *deva-mandira* was a temple, *sayana-mandira* was a bedroom, *rati-mandira* could mean either a room for sexual pleasures or the vulva itself. The famous Sanskrit dictionary *Amarakosha* includes the word in the 'city group' and makes the series of words *griha*, *niketana*, *sadana*, *bhavana*, *agara*, *mandira* synonymous. So, to think that erotic sculptures are a sacrilege in temples unless they can be given a religious explanation, however forced, is to raise a fictitious scandal, of which the makers of the temples were blissfully unconscious.

But prurience is resourceful, and even after all this I have to answer the objection that *qua* art the pieces are obscene. If, however, this chapter has not been written wholly in vain there should be no difficulty in realizing that the Hindus simply could not have any such feeling, and were quite capable of enjoying them openly and natur-

ally. If they could do all the things I have described, I suppose they could also stare at a few stones which represented the same interest. It should also not be forgotten that the temples were places of popular gathering and entertainment, and people expected all kinds of amusement in them. It is well known that even now the places of pilgrimage and religious fairs are looked upon by prostitutes as particularly profitable centres for their profession.

As it happens, there is still another possible objection to dispose of. It may be said that images showing divinities in erotic postures must necessarily have a religious symbolism. I would reply, not necessarily. Normally, the erotic sculptures do not represent divinities, but even when they do there can be nothing to outrage Hindu sensibilities. We Hindus are quite used to reading about the amorous adventures of our gods as pure amorous adventures, and see no blasphemy or profanation in the descriptions. The epics and classical Sanskrit poetry offer no apologies for these, and indeed in these stories the gods and goddesses are figures of mythology, not objects or subjects of cults. This distinction between the two aspects of the gods was made by the Greeks and Romans as it also was by the Hindus.

To clinch this long argument—it is no more necessary to seek an eponymous ancestor for the erotic sculptures in primitive fertility cults than it is for the descriptions in Sanskrit literature. If, despite this, far-fetched and even absurd explanations are given for the sculptures when they are not thought necessary for the descriptions, the reason is obvious. For every fifty thousand people who can see the graphic representations perhaps only one can read the descriptions in Sanskrit. The Hindus of ancient times took both in the same spirit, considering them to be the expressions of the same subject in two mediums. The moral sensibility which professes to be shocked by these pieces and yet is not proof against looking at them out of the corners of the eyes and nudging the wife, is not a

Hindu heritage. The British had to come to India to bring it into existence. With the other legacies of British imperialism the prudery has been taken over by our lower middle-class politicians.

The erotic sculptures rouse a good deal of interest which should have been, but usually is not, dragged out into the open. They have a connection with Hindu sexual life, and have been misunderstood. For these reasons I have thought it necessary to introduce this excursus, which I hope will not be regarded as superfluous. I shall now pass on to my main topic—and complete my account of the sexual life of the Hindus down to the points to which I wish to take the story. There is yet another phase of it to describe, and it is the lowest phase reached by the ancient Hindus.

If anyone were to assume that after reaching the two dead ends I have described, namely, the futile elaboration and the empty vicariousness, the Hindus would throw up the sponge in their fight for sensual enjoyment, he would be seriously underestimating the desperation of their urge. It made them try every means of keeping their sexual pleasures alive as long as any strength was left in them. In the very last phase they resorted to a new dodge to double the exhaustion which was always at their heels, and dashed straight into sacrilege without, however, perceiving that it was so.

It is common knowledge that those rakes who are most jaded take a perverse delight in evoking sacred symbolisms for the sex act, and in violating things which are holy. Casanova relates a story which illustrates this vividly. He had a liaison in Venice with a nun, who after coming to an assignation with him wanted to change from her robe of *religieuse*. But Casanova purposely asked her to keep it on, so that he might feel the piquancy of it. The nun with even greater depravity and blasphemy replied: *Fiat voluntas tua.* In the same way, particularly depraved Romans went after the Vestal Virgins.

The Hindus did something like that, but with far greater thoroughness and in a wholly different spirit. They brought sexual life into their religion, or religion into their sexual life—in effect both were the same: but there was neither jest nor ribaldry in their sacrilege, only solemnity, which was the most dreadful thing about it.

I wish I could say that this was the lowest point of descent in the Hindu search for sexual enjoyment. Unfortunately, it was not, As the centuries passed by their sexual life lost even the fascination of perversity, and became chokingly commonplace and squalid. Its all-pervasive degradation at the beginning of the nineteenth century, especially in the towns, so shocked the Bengali Hindu reformers, who were inspired by European moral ideas, that they made it as much a part of their reforming campaign to rescue their countrymen from this slime as to preach the new monotheism. I know of this phase partly from my historical reading and partly from my observation of the survivals in my young days.

The reformers succeeded to a remarkable degree, particularly in the higher strata of their society. In this they were, however, helped by another force, an emotional impact which was the real power behind the appearance of a new conception of the sexual relationship that appeared in Bengal in the nineteenth century. It was a revelation of the passional life of Europe through English literature which took the Bengali Hindus by storm, and its impact led them to recast the love of Europe in a Bengali Hindu mould, and bring into existence one of the most beautiful passional creations in literature and life ever seen in history.*

* In order to give an indication of the nature of the impact I would mention that my parents told me the story of Dante and Beatrice when I was only a boy, in connexion with two illustrations published in a Bengali literary magazine. One of these was a reproduction of Rossett's painting *Dante's Dream*, and the other of Harry Halliday's *Meeting of Dante and Beatrice*. My father liked the pictures so much that in later life he hung two large reproductions of these paintings in sepia in his room.

But this also was to die and die even in Bengal. Today the Hindus are at the beginning of another phase of their sexual life. As in all other things connected with their personal life, here too, there is a reversion to the traditional Hindu attitudes and habits with a reassertion of the old commonplace, arid, and degrading sensuality, made even worse by the addition to it of an imported sensuality of the most offensively shallow Western type.

I shall not discuss any of these later phases in this book, for they will form the subject-matter of another book dealing with the modern life of the Hindus. I am leaving even the analysis of the mixture of sex and religion for that work, because though this began in late Hindu times, evidence for it comes mostly from writings and practice from the fifteenth century downwards. In this essay I set myself the aim of describing the sexual life of the ancient Hindus only.

But I cannot close it without putting on record what I feel about the contemporary situation in India. To anyone who has any respect for life, or any feeling for the extraordinary filigree of sensibility which men and women as children of love and life have woven round the sex act, any reverence for it as the fountain of life, this contemporary discharge of low, cheap, and unceasing smut and rut is agony. Yet there is no escape from it, because on every pavement and in every street this filth is oozing out of the eyes, and even dripping from the tongues, which somehow unconsciously loll out.

This degradation, which is regarded as smartness by those who are wallowing in it, should not be called an abyss. That would be to give it an undeserved verbal dignity. It is gutter, and the foulest part of it is the Westernized stretch, on which float soggy copies of *Lolita*, *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, illustrated books on Hindu erotic sculpture, and *basse vulgarisation* of the Kamasutra in

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My mother did not know English, and my father had only a school education.

even baser English; and also the oily smiles and sniggers of the Anglicized Hindus who read these books.

Seeing and hearing all this a man feels like recalling the old Hindu sexual life, wild and tortured as it was, with all the passion that is evoked for the gods of Greece by the famous opening of the Schubert-Schiller song: *'Schöne Welt, wo bist du?*—Beautiful world! Where art thou?'

Chapter 11

THE HINDU ACEDIA

So their great anodyne also failed the Hindus. But that did not make them discontinue its use, for it is only one step from the sedative to the drug. That is to say, their excessive sexual commerce continued as a futile and meaningless indulgence, enfeebling the body and even more the mind, sapping the capacity for enjoyment, and yet making the enslavement stronger and stronger. Nevertheless, it would be underestimating the yearning for forgetfulness of the Hindus to think that they would stop at this and not seek other remedies for their sorrow. They did, and some of them even discovered another solace which was absolutely fool-proof, because it was dependent only on self-deception induced by continuous auto-suggestion. I do not think that I have to say in so many words that this sedative was religious. If anywhere, it is among the Hindus that one finds decisive proof of the saying that religion is the opium of the people.

The most pathetic form of this consolation, which is to be seen everywhere even now, is an inexplicable devotion to an unresponsive material object, for instance, a brass image of the crawling baby Krishna, or a crude and garish print, on which women and at times even men will shower all the love and adoration of which they are cap-

able. They will clothe and offer food to it, carry it about in their journeys, hold it in their lap, and lament, even if one feed had to be omitted in a train, that Gopal is suffering from hunger.

What is frightening in this is the stability of the hallucination. Ectoplasmic images disappear, the brass ghost never. It should also be pointed out that the Hindus never take to religion with this whole-hearted abandon until they are 'broke' morally and intellectually, also emotionally. Whenever any obvious or assertive religious inclination is to be seen in a Hindu always say: *'Cherchez le chagrin'*, for failure of mental and bodily strength may then be safely assumed. In my young days I used to parade my anti-religious opinions, and the elders before whom I liked to show off in this way always remarked contemptuously, 'Let the hot blood of youth cool, and you will come to heel.' Nothing abashed I would reply, 'Yes, I shall also have a bent spine, and I shall walk with a stick. What does that prove?' Today, as an old man I would say that I have seen so much of this feckless tragedy of Hindu life on this green earth and under the blue sky, that the moment I see any sign of the Hindu dementia in me, I shall cry out, *'Nunc dimittis. . . .'*

But of course, given the natural clinging to life and hope of all human beings, which even the Hindus have not been able to wear out, this falling back on self-delusion as a means of relief from the strain of living in the Indian environment could never become universal, even though it could be seen frequently. The majority were bound to pursue their ends in life as a matter of habit and obey the discipline of the biological prison into which they had converted their existence. But even when successful in the worldly way, they have never been able to overcome a sense of hollowness in living. So they have a continuous feeling of boredom as a contrapuntal line to the main tune of their existence. The modern educated Hindu in a high position in the bureaucracy, who is absolutely spherical, thanks to the creature comforts that he can enjoy, has

this no less than the Hindu who is lean and has a hungry look. Those who know English and are fashionable call the gnawing sense of failure 'frustration', taking recourse to the modish word. It is astonishing to hear this word perpetually repeated even by students and by young men who have just entered life. I have, however, called this inescapable accompaniment of Hindu life its *acedia.*

But it is not really the *acedia* of which the monks spoke. It is *acedia* mingled with a more positive feeling—irritation and bad temper, which makes it a dangerously active form of ennui. The ancient Hindu moralists had already discovered it, though still as a mental state which was paralysed rather than irritated. They called it *klaivya,* which meant impotence in the physiological sense in the first instance, and was afterwards employed to cover all forms of mental inertia. This paralysis of the will is so universal among modern Hindus that even the old idea that it is something to be ashamed of has disappeared from their mind, and they have forgotten the stern warning of their own moralists that it is a deadly sin. On the other hand, they have made an addition of their own to it, and supplemented the inertia with a continuous but inactive bad temper and a corrosive sense of grievance. In its existing form what I have called Hindu *acedia* is something like an acid.

This *acedia* in its quiescent form is always observable in the lifeless expression of men and women in public places, and the impassivity is most pronounced in places and situations in which one would expect the greatest display of energy and alertness, for example, in shops, post-offices, or railway stations. The grave shopkeeper does not condescend to answer a customer until the inquiry is repeated at least three times, and not infrequently he does not respond to it at all, and the buyer moves on to the next shop. At a railway station the prospective travellers always stand or sit as if they had taken a vow not to move a limb. At a bus stop women and sometimes even men squat on the pavement. At the counter of a post-

office the clerk fills in the few blanks that are left in the forms with a stately leisureliness that ignores a queue of fifty people before him.

But it is near or in the courts of law that one sees most of this staticity, although it would seem to be so utterly inconsistent with the mission on which people come to such a place. You may watch crowds of hundreds of men, but you will never detect in their faces any sign of the ravening greed for money or revenge which brings them to the courts. On the contrary there is an ineffable unworldliness. I watch this with fascination at the bus terminus from which I travel and which is adjacent to the new courts of Delhi. The litigants do not seem to be in a hurry even to get down from the bus, and in descending the three steps with which the Delhi transport authorities provide their vehicles, these men alternately grasp the right and the left handle, and literally brachiate down like the Two-toed Sloth.

Over and above, there is something which is even more awe-inspiring. Since the craze for litigation seizes men late in life and increases with age, this slow procession of human beings creates a collective impression of senility to see which is to feel senile oneself. At first I used to get irritated by the spectacle and was repelled by it. But now I have learnt to see differently, with comprehension and also a passing sympathy.

I shall describe my impression by quoting a favourite author of mine, who puts the words in the mouth of a character of one of his stories. This man finds himself through a strange mischance in the company of a ghostly crew of a ghostly ship, and as he sees them he writes:

They all bore about them the marks of a hoary old age. Their knees trembled with infirmity; their shoulders were bent double with decrepitude; their shrivelled skins rattled in the wind; their voices were low, tremulous, and broken; their eyes glistened with the rheum of years; and their gray hairs streamed terribly in the tempest.

Next, about the impression made by the captain: 'It is the intense, the wonderful, the thrilling evidence of old age, so utter, so extreme, which excites within my spirit a sense—a sentiment ineffable.' Finally, the over-all effect is summed up:

The crew glide to and fro like the ghosts of buried centuries; their eyes have an eager and uneasy meaning; and when their fingers fall athwart my path in the wild glare of the battle-lanterns, I feel as I have never felt before, although I have been all my life a dealer in antiquities, and have imbibed the shadows of fallen columns at Baalbec, and Tadmore, and Persepolis, until my very soul has become a ruin.

Do you know where these lines are from? From Poe's tale *MS Found in a Bottle,* in which the ghost ship ends by plunging madly within the grasp of the whirlpool—and by going down amid a roaring, and bellowing, and thundering of ocean and tempest.

I, too, have been a dealer in antiquities in the sense of being a student of archaeology and ancient history, and this reading has plunged the greater part of my consciousness into the dark, deep, dank, and warm soil of the past with a little shoot, a green plumule, trying to raise its head into the air and sun of the future. But seeing this preternatural exhibition of age near my house that little shoot seems to wither, and I am frightened into crying out, 'Geron, Vuzurk, Maha-sthavira! I renounce life!'

This massive staticity has even succeeded in taking away the impression of motion from movement from place to place which is the distinguishing mark of life at the animal level as distinct from plant life. Even when these men walk it seems as if rooted trees were waving in the wind, hardly anything else. It is normally impossible to have any feeling that they are going towards any goal and are not just somnambulists. Conversely, anyone who walks briskly is not only stared at, but actually jeered at. In a Hindu environment I have acquired the un-Hindu

habit of walking in the European manner, that is to say, quickly and with a sense of the goal towards which I am going. So I hear even elderly people shouting after me, 'Left, right; left, right.' Street urchins march alongside of me with long strides, and giving it up go into peals of laughter. Older boys, and occasionally even grown-ups, call out, 'Johnnie Walker!' I naturally do not seem to hear them, and walk along. Then they come up to me at times, and waving their arms about, jeer in a ribald manner, putting their slogan in Hindi, '*Are Jahny.*' I learned to my mortification that it was not even the Johnnie Walker of whisky that they referred to, but a caricature of him by an Indian film-star.

Friends ask me why I do not go for these impertinent young fellows. I reply that I retain my common sense at least to the point of forcing myself to bear all this philosophically. But being also a naturally irascible man, I sometimes breathe a wish that I possessed a flame-thrower and was free to use it. In my conduct and behaviour, however, I never betray this lack of charity. I maintain the realism which always reminds me that if to the un-Hindu habit of walking briskly I had added the still more un-Hindu inclination to resent impertinence, my non-conformism, instead of being tolerated with good humour, would have been squashed. Moreover, I never forget that my ways are utterly inconsistent with the spirit of the milieu and with the culture shaped by it, and that I give deliberate provocation to ridicule. At my age I should have shown not only the external stolidity of the Hindu, but also the crumbling, moth-eaten, internal hollowness.

But the impression of motionlessness which the Hindus generally give is instantly broken and dispelled as soon as a transaction is on and mouths are opened. The behaviour of the Hindus in public places tends to be extraordinary, unnaturally, and very often illegally quarrelsome. Tempers are lost at the most trifling provocation. One day my hand (which is six inches at its

longest and three and a half inches at its widest) brushed against that of a fellow-pedestrian. He glared back at me and roared, 'Do you think your hand is a pat of butter?' One night, returning home from a dinner, I went to a taxi stand where two were waiting. Both wanted to take me, and the drivers started a loud altercation, which developed into filthy, reciprocal abuse. Wishing to put an end to it, I stepped into one of the taxis, and told the driver to go ahead. At once the other man came flying at him with the starting handle, and a scuffle began. As a final effort, I stepped down, declared that even if I had to walk five miles I would not take either taxi, and moved off. I had not gone more than a furlong when the more aggressive driver overtook me and picked me up. In these street brawls violence always gets the better of non-violence in our Gandhian society.

Indeed, these quarrels are such common sights in all Indian cities that everybody takes them as natural. There are fights between conductors and passengers as well as passengers and passengers in buses, between customers and shop-keepers, in the shops, between creditors and debtors either at the front door or in the streets—the creditors usually waylay and insult a defaulting debtor in the streets. Children of neighbours quarrel and almost invariably involve the parents. I see fights between two husbands, in which the respective wives station themselves behind the other woman's husband and scratch or pummel the helpless backs. When after getting used to such sights in India Tagore for the first time went to Japan, what struck him was the quiet behaviour of the Japanese people. The absence of shouting and quarrelling made him write:

There is one thing here which strikes the eye in all public places. It is that there are crowds in the streets, but no noise whatever. It was as if the Japanese had not learnt to shout. It is said that in Japan even the babies do not cry. Till now I have not seen one child crying. When motoring in the streets, one finds push-

carts and the like creating obstructions occasionally, the driver of the car waits quietly, and neither pours out abuse nor shouts. In the street, all of a sudden, a cycle looked like hitting against a car, the driver in our country would not have stopped short of unnecessary abuse of the cyclist, but that man did not even cast a glance. I have heard from the Bengalis here that if in a collision between two cycles or a cycle and a car even bleeding is seen, the two parties neither scream nor abuse each other, but shake off the dust and go their way.

I sometimes wonder which manner is really unnatural. Living in India I am hardly entitled to say that ours is.*

In the homes, too, the quarrelsomeness is universal and persistent. The general atmosphere of a Hindu home is one of heavy and listless dullness, which drives the inmates out into the streets at all times of the day. People are always gadding about, putting an intolerable extra burden on the inadequate public transport of the cities. But how could it be helped when the home just chokes? Staying quietly at home of an evening is not therefore one of the pleasures of life in Hindu society, and among the well-to-do the possession of cars has made running away from home not only easy but also fashionable. If owing to circumstances anyone is compelled to stay at home, that is looked upon as a form of imprisonment. So, in the buses I see women with newborn babies, whose red and wrinkled skin can be seen through the folds of the towels in which they are wrapped. It would seem that in

* In this connexion one extraordinary instance of loss of temper might be recalled. Dr Gopal, son of the President of India and himself a high official, was travelling from Jakarta to Delhi by air. In the aeroplane, while at a meal, he was having a conversation with a fellow-passenger who was described as an 'employee' of the Indian Embassy in Indonesia. The conversation developed into an argument and it became so heated that the man attacked Dr Gopal with the knife and wounded him. The injury was minor, but Dr Gopal had to go to a hospital on his arrival in Delhi.

India human beings are motile like protozoa, though not mobile in the metazoic animal fashion.

Such dullness would make any change welcome, and people would say, 'Anything rather than this.' But when the change does come, it is seen to be more frightening and unendurable, for it is always for the worse—dullness giving place to personal clashes ranging from bickerings to the most sordid and indecent explosions. When there is any conversation in the family beyond the routine exchange of words necessary for living together, it is normally either an arid discussion of money matters, or a peevish airing of grievances against relatives, or—if the family is exceptionally united—a wailing in chorus about wants which cannot be removed.

Dwelling on and sorrowing for conditions which cannot be helped is as common in Hindu society as is the want itself. It never occurs to these people that the best way to deal with financial troubles about which nothing can be done for the time being is not to talk about them. On the contrary, if a family is seen to be cheerful in poverty and trying to put a brave face on a hard lot, that is set down, not to courage or fortitude, but to the secret possession of money combined with a hypocritical pretence of poverty, which is taken as a heartless mockery of real poverty. If, over and above, a family in difficulty tries to keep up its self-respect by maintaining appearances outwardly by a kind of expense which is not usual in Hindu society its poverty is cast in its teeth in the most brutal manner.

For some years after my marriage my wife and I with two children had to go through very great want, for I was then unemployed. Still, to keep up our spirits, we tried to live in pleasant surroundings and once we bought some silk net for curtaining our windows. Even though made in England they were not very expensive in those days. It was very soon brought to our ears that our neighbours were saying with cutting sarcasm: 'They have no money for food, and they buy silk curtains.' To be

gay and cheerful is looked upon as inhumanity towards one's less fortunate fellow-creatures. The resentment, even when not put in words, is always implied in the looks. The reproachful eyes seem to say: 'It is all very well for you to look so happy, but we . . .', and the hand is pressed to the heart. You can make things very much worse by inviting someone to see your flowers or plants. The shrill and bitter reply would be, 'As if I am in the mood for such frivolities!'

Seeing long faces day in day out, at one time I used to call our world the world of the Mock-Turtle. At times I even sent forth the scream 'Hjckrrh!' and chuckled, 'It's all his fancy, that: he hasn't got no sorrow, you know.' But with age I have given up that flippancy. I realize that one should not go on playing the fool in a sob-chamber if one has to live in it till the end of life. One should try to understand why our world has become a sob-chamber, and, so far as one can, give everybody sympathy. Thus it happens that though even today I can see no real sorrow in the lives of most fellow-Hindus I can perceive all the sorrow of their delusion of sorrow.

But the Hindu world is not even an unmixed Mock-Turtle's world. For most of the time a toxic peevishness simmers in it, and when it breaks out in personal feuds the outpourings of pent-up hate and anger are awful to see. Most Hindu families, especially the joint, develop and retain chronic maladjustments, which are of three kinds: monetary clashes which take place between fathers and sons, brothers and brothers, mothers and sons, and of course between uncles and nephews and cousins and cousins; clashes for power are mostly seen between mothers-in-law and daughters-in-law but also between the wives of two brothers; the emotional stresses and explosions, on the other hand, are confined to mothers and sons, and husbands and wives. In these quarrels all the parties get equally mauled.

Even after such abnormal mutual relations have become permanent, the relatives live together, always tread-

ing on smouldering volcanoes, which erupt from time to time in smoke, fire, and brimstone. In the course of the quarrels all reticence and reserve is thrown to the winds, and the grossest abuse and even blows are exchanged. The weak are beaten, equals hurt one another, until the other members of the family and at times even neighbours separate the parties. Otherwise kind, decent, honourable, and educated men do things which remain in the mind like unwashable stains of shame, and are felt as unhealed festering sores. All, men as well as women, show a perverse genius in discovering words which will wound most.

Such unrestrained outbursts would certainly have led to a total disruption of family and social life if the environment which was responsible for them had not also generated another faculty of the mind which could neutralize their effect. Somehow an alkali is always present with the acid of Hindu life: it is a marvellous and boundless tolerance of bad language and blows, which is some sort of a conditioned reflex of forgiveness. The Hindu possess a faculty of callous charity. Two passengers in a railway compartment who have fought with shameless selfishness for seats, will, as soon as they have cooled off, offer betel, cigarettes, and even sweets to each other, and be friends for the rest of a long journey of, say, eight hundred miles. In the families the sun hardly ever rises on anger. After a brawl lasting till midnight not only peace but even harmony seems to be restored the next morning.*

* I might add that the tolerance of bad temper was extended to the man who attacked Dr Gopal. The matter was raised in the Indian parliament, and Mr Nehru himself gave the information that the man was not normal and that he had previously assaulted the Indian ambassador in Teheran. Asked why the man was not dismissed, the Prime Minister of India replied that disciplinary action had been taken. One wonders what kind of disciplinary action it was which left in the service a man who had assaulted an ambassador and his superior and did not cure him of his habit of assault. For the assault on Dr Gopal the man got a short term in jail, though.

But such alterations of conflict and co-existence cannot go on without leaving some permanent effects on the personality and mind. The first effect is the creation of a double consciousness, each complete and coherent, but capable of shutting out the other when one is dominant. The parallel mental states are seen particularly in married life, and naturally the wife exhibits the split personality most typically. In one of her personalities she does not seem to remember any grievance, and goes about quietly doing her work, and even shows affection to the husband. But once a quarrel has begun, it does not remain limited to the occasion; every quarrel since the day of wedding is recalled; all the grievances become connected; in retrospect the sorrows gain a cumulative fury, and the anger is poured out in red-hot streams of lava. Listening to the words, one would naturally imagine that a resumption of married life could not take place, and as long as the fit lasts both the husband and wife also think so. But, in actual fact, no such calamity comes about, because the Nature of Things in India sees to it that this does not happen. So, one might say that for most Hindu husbands the wife is a beautiful bath of gleaming porcelain, with both cold and hot water taps, with this difference, however, that the taps are not under control but flow as they list, and by turns the husband is bathed in a cool spray of love or scalded in a geyser of anger.

But the more serious permanent effect is the settling down of an unbroken pall of gloom and dejection on personal life, which is like grey mists on a marsh. I have already given some indication of it, and from that its whole nature can be guessed. But remarkable as the gloom is by itself, it is made more so by three special and peculiar features it presents. The first of these is a gloating on troubles of a personal character and on sorrow, which makes not only a virtue but even a glory of necessity. People talk about their troubles, poverty, and disappointments as if these were things to brag about. They do not want to outgrow even the painful grief of

bereavement, and keep it alive by every artificial means they can think of. That is their idea of loyalty to the dead, and they never suspect that it is really the luxury of self-pity.

Conversely, they get angry, and in any case are hurt, if anybody says to any one of them that he, or especially she, is looking well and happy. 'I, happy?'—will be the exclamation in an injured tone. Therefore, in speaking to a woman in our society one has to be particularly careful about such *faux pas*. On the other hand, one of the surest ways to appeal to her heart is to remark how ill, poorly, emaciated, or miserable she is looking. A lady I know, and who works in a school, was not well during a vacation. So, when she went back to work, her colleagues and pupils noticed her ailing appearance. She came home with a bursting heart and told me triumphantly, 'At home nobody even believed that I was ill, but whoever saw me at school said that I had become unrecognizable.'

It follows from this that amongst us there is a keen competition in feeling unhappy, and in trying to prove that oneself is the most unhappy. Everybody is therefore ready to dispute everybody else's title to be miserable. If a woman claims a record share of sorrows the woman to whom she is speaking will at once treat her to a longer tale. In this rivalry one will say that everyone is a stealer of his own happiness, and the other will retort that he is also a hoarder of his own sorrows.

The third accompaniment to the gloom of life is an insatiable craving for sympathy, even from strangers, or rather mostly from strangers. One woman meeting another casually will very soon begin a story of woe, especially if she has been spoken to or even looked at kindly. These confessions are made in the course of railway journeys and even very short bus trips. But the explanation for this unreserve is really simple. It is only strangers who can give sympathy liberally without incurring the responsibility of following it up by practical action. Besides, it is a natural human impulse to have a kind look

for anybody who appears to be suffering, and the cases are in their great majority genuinely pathetic. In any case, the large, liquid, black, and sad eyes do draw out one's deepest compassion. As Emerson put it, 'the effect of the indulgence of this human affection is a certain cordial exhilaration'.

On their part, the recipients feel genuinely grateful and relieved to have only lip sympathy. In their unwavering fatalism the Hindus do not believe that unless a kind fate does something, fellow-men can do anything for them: the most precious service from man to man is therefore only commiseration. This deep-seated private disposition of the Hindus explains why during the fighting with China the Government of India addressed all and sundry for sympathy, and why the people of India found the sympathy when it was given so soothing, instead of being insulting.

The last special feature of the Hindu gloom is less well known because it can be observed only within the family. It is the impulse, which gradually grows into a habit, of one of the members of a family, generally a wife, to injure herself by neglecting health in every conceivable way, out of an imaginary grievance that nobody cares for her. So, in order to punish the husband, who is guilty in her eye without having any awareness of his guilt, she would overwork, partly starve, and suppress disorders, until one day a sudden serious illness startles the man and puts a heavy and at times unbearable financial burden on him. Even then the woman would at times only pretend to take the medicines and secretly throw them away. Before the calamity bursts on him the husband most often has no inkling of what is happening without his knowledge, and even when a woman is robust enough to take all this without serious harm, every meal omitted or not fully enjoyed and every headache is entered against the husband in a mentally maintained charge-sheet for the final day of reckoning. When that day comes woe to the man who takes the plea that he was ignorant.

In extreme cases this sense of grievance leads to a strange readiness to commit suicide, which is very pronounced in Hindu women. This is due to a general and overpowering conviction of the futility of living in everlasting suffering. The immediate incidents that provoke these acts of madness are in most cases only the pulling of the trigger. In these fits of monomania certain material objects become symbols of release and exercise a dangerous attraction. For instance, some plant supposed to be poisonous, or a pond, a roof, a high window, a railway line becomes an irresistible temptation. Even the Qutb Minar of Delhi was made to play this role. For some years there were so many suicides by jumping from its top that the Archaeological Survey stopped the going up of people singly. When this proved ineffectual, the Department disfigured the monument by putting up a high wire fence round the balconies. These have, however, been recently taken down.

The situation is tragic, not only pathetic, when seen in its eternal twilight. If any world had and has the right to put up this inscription:

> Through me you pass into the City of Woe:
> Through me you pass into eternal pain;
> Through me among the people lost for aye.
>
> All hope abandon, ye who enter here.

the Hindu world has and had that right.

But the Hindus have by their own behaviour made their tragedy pitiful. Deadened by their slow, dull, and benumbed palsy of suffering they have become unheroic, and their absorption in self-pity has made them incapable of analysing their sorrow. They have become even more incapable of perceiving and admitting that any action of theirs might be responsible for it. They will always throw the blame on others. I would, however, say that the obstinate self-righteousness that they exhibit amounts

to unconscious wisdom, for their sorrows and suffering are created by a power in whose hands they are only puppets. Even their own incredible follies, by means of which they bring untold but unnecessary troubles on themselves, are due to a sort of predestination ordained by the same power. So, if they disavow their moral responsibility for their sad lot, they are not as wrong and perverse as anyone nourished on the doctrine of free will might feel inclined to think.

But where they do go wrong is in not recognizing the operation of the same determination in those whom they hold responsible for their sorrows—be they father, brother, husband, wife, friend, neighbour, countrymen, government, or Nehru: all of whom are as helpless puppets in inflicting the suffering as they are themselves in being victims of it. All are equal instruments in the hands of our collective destiny, of which they have no inkling. It is this destiny which I would ask fellow-Hindus to become aware of. Listen then to the voice of your Lord, O Hindus:

Tell ye your children of it, and *let* your children *tell* their children, and their children another generation.

That which the palmerworm hath left hath the locust eaten; and that which the locust hath left hath the canker worm eaten; and that which the canker worm hath left hath the caterpillar eaten.

Awake, ye drunkards, and weep; and howl, all ye drinkers of wine, because of the new wine; for it is cut off from your mouth.

Chapter 12

THE LEAST OF THE MINORITIES

In India today all non-Hindus are called minorities, and this in itself is an indication of their political status. The

most significant thing about this usage is that it was introduced and is being continued precisely by those who swear that there is only a single nation in the country. The same men, however, accepted a partition of India whose only justification in principle was that the Hindus and the Muslims constituted two nations.

The Muslims of India are indeed a minority. The Hindus regard them as such, and they themselves do not think differently, though their leaders do at times declare that they are as good 'Indians' as the Hindus. I think it was a Bengali-Brahmin-Hindu professor of history and political science who first put forward the suggestion that the Hindu-Muslim differences in India should be settled on the lines of the recommendations for the protection of minorities put forward by the League of Nations.

But in terms of absolute numbers the Muslims are not a small minority, being just under forty-seven million in a population of 439 million. But judged by the position they hold in relation to their numerical strength they might be said to be the least of the minorities. Perhaps in the eye of their Hindu rulers they have even less importance than the Goanese Christians with Portuguese names.

Whenever in the streets of Delhi I see a Muslim woman in a *burqa*, the Islamic veil, I apostrophize her mentally: 'Sister! you are the symbol of your community in India.' The entire body of the Muslims are under a black veil.

The strongest impression that I got of their eclipse was at an evening party given by the ambassador of a European country. There was a very large number of guests, and, of course, there was the usual forgathering of Hindu politicians, officials, and diplomats, who were either in the Islamic *sherwani* and *pajama*, or in the new buttoned-up coat and trousers. I recognized among the company a Muslim nobleman who in the British days had held very high office. Had it been old times everyone in that Hindu crowd, many of whom must have known him,

would have gone up to him, made a deep salaam, and inquired if the Nawab Sahib's *mizaz* (mind or mood) was *sharif* (pure, untroubled). But that evening no one was talking to him. At least, whenever I saw him, I found him standing alone.

After chatting with some Arabs from Syria on the lawn I came back to the loggia, and found the Nawab standing against a pilaster with his arms folded on his chest. He was looking intently in front of him. At first I thought it was the laughing and gesticulating Arabs who were holding his attention with their exuberance. But it was not so, for his eyes were very much farther away—seemingly on the dark shrubbery behind the lawn which was shining under electric light. I wondered whether he was seeing the *revenants* of the former Sultans and Padishas of Delhi, for that site, before the British built their new capital on it, was an immense cemetery. That, too, was not the case, for the Nawab's eyes were completely vacant.

Then I remembered a cartoon in *Punch*. A vicar's wife had gone to see an old and crippled parishioner who was illiterate, and she kindly asked him how he managed to occupy the time, since he could neither get about nor read. The man replied: 'Well, Mum, sometimes I sits and thinks; and then again I just sits.' I thought the Nawab was trying to 'just sits'.

One thinks of the Poles as an unhappy people, whom history has treated and is treating very shabbily. But I do not consider that even their fate has been as tragic as that of the Muslims of India, not only in their present state, but even from the time the British ousted them from political power. At one stroke their position was then destroyed, for the only position they had in India was that of a dominant colonial minority ruling a large subject population.

To this was added a deeper humiliation. Islam did not permit any Muslim to remain under the rule of unbelievers, and since the beginning of Islam no large group of Muslims had ever passed under non-Muslim rule. This

began with the European expansion from the seventeenth century onwards, and after the British conquest of India, the Muslims who had treated all non-Muslims in the Islamic states as *Dhimmis*, or tolerated unbelievers, to whom a second-class citizenship was given in lieu of a special tax, found themselves to be very much like *Dhimmis* themselves. They were only fellow-subjects of a Feringhee Power with their former subjects, the Hindu *kafirs*.

In a sense their position was worse than that of the Hindus, because they were suspect in the eye of the new rulers. The British had taken over political power in India from the Muslims, and they assumed rightly that the community would remain disaffected and seditious, cherishing the hope of a revived spell of power. This position was worsened by the Mutiny. Though the rebellion was primarily military and the fighting power of the rebels was furnished mainly by the soldiers of the two high Hindu castes of Brahmin and Kshatriya of the Gangetic plain, belonging to the Bengal Army of the East India Company, the British saw plain Muslim political incitement and ambition, and the two Muslim courts of Delhi and Lucknow by what they had done justified the British suspicion. So, after the suppression of the Sepoy rebellion, the Muslims came under a darker cloud and were themselves corroded and eaten into by their own impotent disaffection.

It was a great Muslim, perhaps the greatest Indian Muslim of modern times, Sir Syed Ahmed Khan of Delhi, who began the rehabilitation of his community. In spite of being a Hindustani Muslim whose ancestors had served the Mogul court, during the Mutiny he had declared himself for the British, as indeed did all the Hindu and other Muslim leaders who were not bigots of the old order. After the end of the rebellion he took up the task of reconciling the Muslims and the British to each other, and the greater task of bringing round his co-religionists to reform themselves and adopt Western education.

His reconciliatory efforts were twofold: on the one hand, he tried to prove that the bulk of the Indian Muslims had remained loyal to the British and therefore it was unfair to hold the whole community responsible for the doings of a part; on the other, he argued with his fellow-Muslims that so long as Islam and Islamic laws were respected by the British India could not be looked upon as a *Dar-al-Harb* or land of strife, in which it was the duty of the followers of Islam to oppose or even fight the unbelievers who were their political masters. But the more constructive efforts of this great man were directed towards giving the Indian Muslims education on Western lines and to liberalize their hidebound beliefs and customs. Already, there was a good deal of leeway to make up, for in respect of education in the modern sense, the Hindus had had a start of nearly fifty years.

Syed Ahmed Khan achieved remarkable success in all his aims, and by the end of the nineteenth century the British and the Indian Muslims seemed to be perfectly ready to bury the hatchet and even to co-operate with each other. This process was helped by the emergence of the Indian nationalist movement which both the British and the Muslims regarded as a Hindu agitation. In the sphere of social, religious, and cultural modernization a number of Muslims appeared who were comparable to the Hindu reformers of the earlier half of the century, and who sought through study and writing to give a new form to the Islamic way of life without sacrificing its basic or essential features.

As the nationalist movement gained momentum the British naturally looked to the Muslims as a counterpoise to the Hindus, and they began to treat the former with a partiality which almost amounted to pampering. The British felt all the more inclined to do so because the Muslims had already unambiguously detached themselves from the nationalist movement conducted by the Indian National Congress. When invited by the Congress leaders to join the organization, the Muslims refused to do so

on the ground that if they did they would be submerged in the Hindu mass and lose their Islamic personality. Thus the entire tripartite political relationship in India of the British, the Hindus, and the Muslims took on a new appearance. The Muslims were rehabilitated and the Hindus in their turn came under suspicion. This was a subject of jokes among us Hindus, and I heard some of these in my young days. Many of our folk-tales were based on the theme of two wives of a king, one of whom was good and neglected and the other wicked and favoured. Our parents and elders used to call the Muslims the Favourite Wife.

But that did not mean that there was any genuine improvement in the position of the Muslims as a community, though a larger number of Muslims secured jobs in the administration and a few basked in the sunshine of British favour as a reward for Muslim 'loyalty'. From the very beginning of the nationalist movement the Muslim leaders felt that a new problem was emerging for them. The aspiration of the Hindus for political independence at once brought into their mind the question of their own position in India if the British left the country and it came under the rule of a Hindu majority. However distant and even impossible that might seem to be at the moment, the Muslim knew that independence for India was bound to come one day, and in that event their future had to be safeguarded. It was all very well to make hay while the sun of British favour shone, but what was to be done when the inevitable rainy day arrived? All the strength of their position for the time being was dependent on the presence of the British. That position was bound to be undermined.

Even so they continued their opposition to the nationalist movement, which they looked upon as Hindu, and when the first open agitation began in 1905, the Muslims sided with the British in Bengal and elsewhere. But this, they could consider only as a very short-term and opportunistic policy, and very soon the need for a new strategy

became obvious to them. They saw clear signs that the British were going to make political concessions to the Hindu nationalists. Therefore, to meet the situation that might arise and develop out of these concessions, the Muslims demanded a number of counterbalancing rights and privileges, and in this they were encouraged by the British authorities in India, including the Viceroy, Lord Minto. To secure their demands the Muslims formed a political organization of their own on the lines of that of the Hindus.

But even this could not be their long-term policy. For the moment the weightage given to them by the British against the Hindus seemed adequate, nevertheless the Muslims had sufficient political realism to perceive that the handicaps for their rivals would disappear with the British when they abandoned India, and the Islamic order in India, if it were to survive, must learn to rely on its own strength. But, given the numerical disproportion between the Hindus and the Muslims in the country, this strength seemed to be wholly insufficient. In this dilemma the Muslims almost unconsciously fell back on the very basic principle of Islam, the brotherhood and solidarity of all the Islamic countries and peoples, and what favoured this trend was the emergence of a new Islamic nationalistic movement, which was, of course, Pan-Islamism.

The first wave of the Pan-Islamic movement reached India in the last quarter of the nineteenth century with the visit of the leader of the Muslim Risorgimento, Syed Jamal-ad-Din al-Afghani. It roused great enthusiasm among the Indian Muslims. On the other hand, both Sultan Abdul Hamid II of Turkey and Nasir-ad-Din Shah of Persia had their special motives to exploit it. The Pan-Islamic sentiment became stronger and stronger in India from the Muslim fear of being submerged with the Hindus, and under its influence many Indian Muslims, even those of East Bengal who were overwhelmingly converts, hardly regarded India as their country and affected to be colonists from the Islamic Middle East. I still re-

member the answer I got from a Muslim of my own district (Mymensingh) when I asked him what fruit he considered best and liked best. 'Dates of Iraq,' was the prompt reply! Of course, to me, this deliberate insult to the mango seemed both insufferable and ridiculous.

But the Pan-Islamic sentiment of the Indian Muslims, which was genuine, could not go with their opportunistic flirtation with the British for immediate advantages, and therefore very soon a conflict between the pragmatic Muslim policies and true Muslim loyalties made its appearance. This conflict remained latent until certain historical events forced a choice in favour of the sentiment.

As it happened, it was Czarist Russia from which came the first warning of the danger implicit in Pan-Islamism for British rule in India, which the local British, and more especially the British authorities, both civil and military, with their hostility to the Hindu nationalism and their interested partiality for the Muslims, were inclined to ignore. At the end of 1910 both Czar Nicholas II and Stolypin spoke to Sir George Buchanan, the British ambassador in St Petersburg, about the danger. But Buchanan with characteristic British empiricism immediately observed to the Czar that it was rather with the Hindus than with the Mahommedans that the British troubles in India had originated. None the less, the British Foreign Office was not wholly indifferent to the possibility of danger, and Sir Arthur Nicolson, then Permanent Under-Secretary of State, informed Sir George Buchanan that Benckendorff, the Russian ambassador in London, had also left a series of questions with him and he had passed them on to the India Office to find out what steps the India Government was taking towards controlling and influencing the instruction which was being given to the Muslims in India in their own schools.

The latent opposition between the true feelings of the Muslims and their opportunistic siding with the British came up to the surface with the Italian attack on Tripoli in 1911. Indian Muslims were shocked and in their anger

they expected the British Government to condemn the naked aggression. The Government of India with its pro-Muslim policy and sentiment at once addressed panic-stricken appeals to London. These seriously annoyed Sir Edward Grey, who said that at a moment when the British Government was making every effort to detach Italy from the Triple Alliance, these importunities of the Government of India were very unwelcome.

The Balkan war made matters worse. As soon as it began Sir George Buchanan wrote from St Petersburg:

> The position of His Majesty's Government will be a very difficult one. Their attitude will be watched with jealous apprehension both by His Mahommedan subjects in India and by the Russian public. The former will expect them to throw the weight of their influence into the scale in favour of their co-religionists in Turkey, while the latter will look to England, as a member of the Triple Entente, to support Russia in advocating the cause of the Balkan Slavs.

In fact, the Turco-Italian war and the Balkan war between them largely alienated the Indian Muslims from the British, and exposed the artificial nature of the Anglo-Muslim liaison in India. Another step in the alienation was taken when Turkey entered the first World War on the side of Germany. Already, in the Balkan war, some prominent Muslims of India had gone to Turkey as medical volunteers. Near my home town in East Bengal a fanatical Muslim priest even fenced in a plot of land and proclaimed it as the territory of the Caliphate, and was, of course, suppressed. During the first World War, however, no Muslim could actively take the side of Turkey, but the whole Muslim community remained pro-Turk and violently anti-British.

This led them to another opportunistic move, an alliance (or misalliance?) with Hindu nationalism and the Indian National Congress. Jinnah, who later became the most fanatical champion of Muslim separatism in India,

brought about a coalition of the Muslim League and Congress at Lucknow at the end of 1916. This combination was finally cemented at the end of the war by the treatment of Turkey by the Allies, by the Treaty of Sèvres, and even more by the strongly pro-Greek policies of Lloyd George. As a result, the Hindu nationalist movement and the Muslim Caliphate movement worked hand-in-hand from 1919 to 1922, with equally unconscious cynicism on both sides, until the victory of Mustafa Kemal Pasha and the rejection of the Caliphate by the Turks themselves ended the movement on behalf of the institution by the Indian Muslims, and put an end to the *raison d'être* of the artificial Hindu-Muslim co-operation. In fact, the treaty of Lausanne can be regarded as a definite landmark in Hindu-Muslim relations, and one of the worst Hindu-Muslim conflicts ever seen—the notorious Kohat riots—took place a few months after its ratification by Great Britain.

Not only was the Caliphate rendered an out-of-date symbol for the Pan-Islamic movement by the victory of Turkey, the whole concept of the solidarity of Islam was undermind by the same historical event. The Turks eschewed both the Pan-Islamic and the Pan-Turanian movements, and took their stand on Turkish nationalism in Anatolia. So far as I remember, Mustafa Kemal even expressed indifference, if not disdain, for any sympathy for his country from the Muslims of India. The other Islamic countries too, including the new Arab States and Iran, began to look upon themselves more as territorial nations than as an articulated group in a non-territorial society bound together by a religion.

This deprived the Indian Muslims of the extra-territorial support on which they had reckoned in order to maintain their position as a community with a separate group personality, and made them revert to their old policy of siding with the British against the Hindu nationalists and demanding special rights and privileges for themselves in the new constitutions. Thus it happened that while in the

Non-co-operation movement of 1920-22 the Muslims were with the Congress and the Hindus, in the next nationalist agitation, the Civil Disobedience movement of 1930-32, they sided with the British and in Bengal even sacked and looted Hindu houses in towns and villages. This earned for them a special weightage in the new Constitution which was created by the Government of India Act of 1935, and for the time being the Muslims secured more political power and influence than their numbers even in the Punjab and Bengal entitled them to. In the political set-up of Bengal more especially, the Hindus were reduced to the position of a permanent statutory minority, which finally helped the ruinous partition of the province in 1947.

But the Indian Muslims could not also forget the precariousness of their position. They knew that the artificial weightage given to them could last only as long as those who had provided it, namely, the British, remained in India. With their going, which the Muslims regarded as inevitable, the guarantees conferred by them were also bound, equally inevitably, to become null and void. Thus the problem of protecting the interests of the Muslim community in the absence of the British arose menacingly. They could no longer think of themselves as a component of the non-territorial Islamic society, and there was no longer any possibility of ensuring their continued existence as Muslims on the strength of extra-Indian support. In simple words, the Muslims of India discovered that by regarding themselves as a non-territorial nation they were now to be without any country for themselves.

It was in tackling this dilemma that the Indian Muslims hit on the idea of a partition of the country in order to give themselves the homeland they lacked by carving out a Muslim state from the historic, undivided India. When it was first put forward the idea was considered not only fantastic but even absurdly ridiculous. I assert this with confidence that not even at the end of 1946 did anybody in India believe in the possibility of a partition of the

country. Yet within six months it was announced as a policy, and accepted as a proposal, and in less than three months from the announcement of the plan the monstrous and unnatural partition of India became a fact. The Hindus and the British alike foreswore the principle of unity of India which they had always professed. This was made possible by a combination of three factors—Hindu stupidity in the first instance and Hindu cowardice afterwards, British opportunism, and Muslim fanaticism. The most ironical part of the whole matter was the fact that the most fanatical and determined of the Muslim champions of a *Dar-al-Islam* in India, the man who made a political impossibility a fact, was Jinnah, a man who had no deep faith in Islam as a religion, but treated it as a form of nationalism.

The creation of Pakistan was a windfall for the Muslims of India. But the artificial homeland which the British thought it was their duty to bring into existence for the Muslims before they could leave India, but which really was the product either of British defeatism or opportunism and discreditable on both assumptions, did not turn out to be a Promised Land for the Muslims. Much as I sympathize with this small and brave country, left in the lurch by the Great Powers in the interest of their own *raison d'état*, I would not yet compare Pakistan with that other small country, Israel, equally or even more unfairly treated by the Great Powers. That country and people look towards the future and will always be a living reality: Pakistan can only look towards the past and remain half-dead. Even from the moment it came into existence it became a source of anxiety, dissatisfaction, and disillusionment.

The immediate tragedy was that about one-third of the Muslims, equal to about half the population of the whole of Pakistan, had to be abandoned to the Hindus. These millions were an awful *korbani*, sacrifice, to Allah Akbar: the Lord checked the hand of Abraham, but not of Jinnah. On the Hindu side as well as the Muslim, the partition

created an illogical and yet inescapable situation—each party gave up its legal right to protect co-religionists, but could not relinquish the moral burden of doing so. This left to both the countries the legacy of an absurd and futile irredentism.

Then there was the problem of survival for an unorganized country in the face of the implacable hostility of India. This was indeed a grave economic and administrative problem, and even a greater one in the military sphere. India held the pistol at the head of Pakistan, until, in 1954, the American alliance delivered the country from that nightmare. Though it is very difficult to have reliable information on such matters, I think I am right in saying that at least twice, if not three times, between 1947 and 1954, India intended to invade Pakistan and was deterred only by American and British remonstrances.

What came next was isolation from all possible helpers. The first plank of Indian foreign policy in the years immediately following independence was to isolate Pakistan from her natural friends, the Muslim countries of the Middle East, and also from Great Britain which in the light of the antecedents could be expected to side with the Muslim country. In both the aims India achieved remarkable success. The Arab countries, inspired more by nationalistic and anti-European sentiment than by Islam, thought that powerful India was more worth cultivating than poor and weak Pakistan. Great Britain's conduct was worse. After inciting Muslim separatism in every way for more than half a century and making a substantial contribution to the impossible situation which led to the partition of India, the British statesmen thought that their duty to Pakistan was fulfilled with its creation and some moral support for its survival, and they were not prepared to give anything more substantial. After the abandonment of the empire in India there was no further reason to support the Muslims against the Hindus; on the contrary, much was to be gained by appeasing the new

Hindu state, which was likely to be a desirable associate in the so-called Commonwealth. Therefore, as regards Pakistan, the British attitude, though considered too partial by the Hindus, amounted only to an inane correctitude, which, given the ratio of strength between the two countries, amounted in fact to a letting down of the smaller, poorer, and weaker state. This attitude on the part of the British Government virtually drove the government of Pakistan into the arms of the United States, and the alliance formed against the will of a majority of the people of that country, is now regarded by its government as only a necessary evil, and nothing better.

I felt the injustice to Pakistan so strongly that I thought it my duty to take the side of that country in two articles published in 1954, one in the influential Indian newspaper *The Statesman,* and the other in *The Times* of London. In the first I scouted the idea that American aid to Pakistan was a military danger to India. Among other things, I said that the decisive argument against assuming the possibility of an attack on India with the arms supplied by the United States was that such a result would defeat the very purpose for which American aid was being given. The United States in its own interest, or, to be quite frank, in the pursuit of its policy of containing the Soviet Union, was trying to create military strength in an area in which it did not exist. That very strength and the stability created by it was likely to be destroyed, and the power frittered away if Pakistan was to attack India. In the article in *The Times,* on the other hand, I attributed the anger of India at the alliance between the United States and Pakistan to the check given by it to India's policy of keeping the latter country weak and isolated. An American journalist saw the article in London on the day he was flying to India and showed it to Mr Nehru as soon as he arrived. The result was described to me in vivid American diction, and I would only disclose that the man got what he deserved for his indiscretion.

But though the American alliance has saved Pakistan from constant bullying by India, it has not brought a more unclouded satisfaction than the bare assurance of survival. The United States, pursuing a policy of naked *raison d'état* wants as many as possible of the new states in Asia to be on its side, but the same *raison d'état* demands that the advantages should be all on the side of the United States, and that the whole series of alliances would be what the British in the early days of their rule in India called the System of Subsidiary Alliances. Therefore Pakistan could hardly hope for positive support for her claims against India, and if any hope of this kind was entertained at all it was bound to lead to disappointment, because it was as much, if not more, to the interest of the United States to gain the goodwill and friendship of India. As between the two countries, if India could at all be hooked, the United States would naturally attach greater importance to her. Perhaps it would attach even greater importance to an unhooked India, for since the war it has been seen to be the uniform policy of the State Department to ride rough-shod over the interests and sentiments of those allies who have been firmly secured and cannot break away, in order to buy up actual or potentially unfriendly nations at the cost of old friends. When even Great Britain and France were and are being subjected to this treatment, Pakistan could not hope for a less one-sided treatment. So, it can be said that the association with the United States has put an end to the international isolation of the Islamic state only in a negative sense. It can be added that if India were to align herself with the United States in any circumstances, the stocks of Pakistan were likely to fall lower.*

But bleak as all this is for Pakistan, what is even more sad for Pakistan than being only a pawn on the American side of the international chessboard is the isolation in

* This was written in September, 1962. The pursuit of American *raison d'état* was demonstrated quite clearly in the course of the Indo-Chinese border-conflict.

time—in the stream of history. Pakistan, unfortunately, is not a flowing river and cannot be one: it has to be only a lagoon by the very circumstances of its creation and by the strongest sentiment which is keeping it going, namely, the loyalty to Islam in a world in which Muslims no longer regard their old faith as the basis of their social and political life. This loyalty pins down the country to a past-regarding outlook.

Yet Pakistan cannot give up Islam, or even relegate it to a secondary position. It has nothing else to stand on. Being poor in natural resources, it cannot even cover up a retrogressive historical evolution by maintaining the pretence or illusion of industrialization, as India is doing. Without its adherence to a lost cause the country itself will be lost, for there is nothing in it besides Islam which can resist the gravitation of the great mass of India and re-absorption in that country.

I hope this exposition of the emergence of Pakistan and its relations with India will not be thought irrelevant in this essay. In point of fact, the position of the Muslims of India *vis-à-vis* the Hindus is not a bilateral one, but trilateral, and the presence of Pakistan is an essential factor in it. A satellite to the Hindu order as the Muslim community of India is, even as such it is held in its humdrum orbit only by the triangular equilibrium created by the gravitation of the two planets. If somehow this equilibrium is disturbed it is impossible to tell what might or might not happen.

Now I can pass on to describe the status of the Muslims in India. The Hindu attitude towards the Muslims of India has been throughout rather paradoxical, like that of the British to their subjects. It is a mixture of indifference tinged with contempt and an absurd fear. The fear was very much marked in the years immediately following independence. In 1954 a high-ranking officer gave me a lurid assessment of the intentions of the Indian Muslims, which was only an echo of the popular belief that if Pakistan made war on India the Indian Muslims

would rise in a body and massacre the Hindus who were ten times their number. I was startled to hear this drivel coming from an officer and asked him if he really believed in such a possibility. He replied that he did, and when I still persisted in my scepticism he forgot his manners and observed, 'You are pitiably ignorant.' I could not forget mine and retort, 'If I had been the Minister of Defence in India, I would at once had sacked an officer who could be so "jittery".'

This fear has not wholly disappeared even now, but it is much less pronounced. After the two recent anti-Muslim riots in Madhya Pradesh (Central Provinces) and Uttar Pradesh (United Provinces), in which large numbers of Muslims were killed in retaliation for offences which could not be laid at the door of the Muslim community as a whole, the Hindu mind has naturally been reassured, for it got a demonstration of the case with which the Muslims could be slaughtered. [In 1964 there was another demonstration.]

Today the general Hindu attitude to the Muslims of India is not actively hostile, though there is an emotional bias against them. There is not much occasion for this to come to the surface, however, and the Hindus feel generous enough to allow the Muslims to carry on their ordinary avocations and live peacefully. But there is virtually no social intercourse between the members of the two communities, no more than there existed in British days. Quite possibly, there is much less, except in the highest political and administrative circles, in which the Muslims are hardly Muslims. The Muslims in India in relation to the Hindus are for all practical purposes what some sociologists dealing with the Hindu social system have called an 'external caste'.

The Muslims themselves know it only too well. There is today a certain demure reserve in their behaviour which is in complete contrast with their former obstreperousness, and which could have created an impression of hypocrisy if it had not been so transparently sincere and even

tinged with melancholy. It clearly shows that they know their place in an India ruled by the Hindus. I would add that they are on the whole showing a great dignity and have no whining underdog air. Being fully aware that they are now the subjects of their former subjects, they do not like to make their lot harder to endure by squealing about it.

But it is slightly different with their leaders. It is not always possible for them to maintain the same quiet reticence. Speaking for their community they do sometimes assert that it is not on a footing of equality with the Hindus. However, they couple this mild protest with a loud protestation of their loyalty to India and their pride in Indian citizenship. They claim a better deal for the country's Muslims as unexceptionable and even fervent Indians. Naturally, in the dispute between India and Pakistan they have to take a rather too emphatic Indian line, which is the only facet of their social and political behaviour which seems to be self-consciously prudential. Still, even that deserves forgiveness.

If I were a Muslim I should certainly not have cared to live in India, just as, being a Hindu, I feel I should never have been at home in Pakistan, though I was born and brought up in what is now eastern Pakistan. There is something unnatural in the continued presence of the Muslims in India and of the Hindus in Pakistan, as if both went against a natural cultural ecology. Whether a person is Hindu or Muslim makes a substantial difference in both the countries, though the unnaturalness is less explicit in India than it is in Pakistan.

Here I have to answer an obvious objection, which anyone at all familiar with the conditions in present-day India is bound to raise. If the Muslims of India are in eclipse in the manner I describe, how does it happen, it will be asked, that some of them occupy very high office in the Government of India and hold so many senior posts in the civil service? Fortunately, this objection is not as lethal to my argument as it might at first seem, and I can

answer it. I have, however, to distinguish between the political and the administrative position of the Muslims, and shall deal with the political position first.

It is the legacy of the Hindu-Muslim political collaboration in the period between 1917 and 1922. When the artificial alliance between the Hindus and the Muslims came to its natural end through the victory of Turkish nationalism and the abolition of the Caliphate, some prominent Muslims whose hatred of the British was not weaker than their dislike for the Hindus, did not break with the Indian National Congress and go over to the separate Muslim political organization. Primarily, they were actuated by the feeling that by joining the Muslim organization they would have to show an opportunistically friendly attitude towards the British and in certain situations even have to co-operate with them. They had been too good Pan-Islamists not to find even insincere siding with the British hateful. But there was also a second reason for their choice. During the period of co-operation they had formed genuinely cordial and intimate personal relations with the leaders of the Congress, especially with those who came from the Islamized Hindu circles of Hindustan, and the friendship weighed with many.

They did not indeed have ulterior motives in remaining with the Hindus and were influenced by sincere convictions. None the less, it did transpire that many of them reaped a good harvest in the worldly way in the era of independence on account of their choice. Some of them were at once given high offices by the Hindus, but not all of them lived to see the epoch in which their political choice could confer worldly position. Nevertheless, they left memories behind them, and they also left a number of their younger associates, who might be called *shagirds* (disciples) in the Muslim parlance, in the hands of their Hindu friends. It was like a dying father entrusting the safety of a minor son to a loyal friend.

It must be said to the honour of the Hindu leaders that they never abandoned their charges. On the cont-

rary, they put them in offices in which they would never have dreamt of putting a fellow-Hindu with equivalent qualifications, unless subjected to a long course of bullying or toadying. Of course, there was a political motive in this generous treatment of the Muslims who were with the Congress. That organization claimed to be above caste and creed, and in proof of this claim the Hindu leaders had to give high posts to Muslims and Christians, and not many Muslims were there to serve a Hindu Government even for the sake of glittering worldly prizes. So those who were ready were made much of, and duly rewarded.

One more explanation has to be added. The present political position of the Muslims is due also to the personality of Mr. Nehru. He is, by social and cultural affiliations, more a Muslim than a Hindu, so far as he is anything Indian at all. His family belonged to the circle of Islamized Hindus, and in the United Provinces those Hindus who had sophistication usually moved among the Muslims of the province, because they were more cultured, whereas the Hindu was somewhat of a boor. Besides, Nehru has no understanding of Hinduism and not even any liking for it. He is usually repelled by anything pronouncedly Hindu. This purely personal fact has certainly contributed to the position of the Muslims in India.

A different reason, on the other hand, stands behind the presence of Muslims in the civil service and administration. One of the things which have earned praise for us from the British and American patrons of India is the fact that when the nationalist leaders took over the government of the country they did not dismiss the Indian officials who had served the British loyally till the end, and had even persecuted and imprisoned nationalists. I have heard it said that by not treating these men in the manner of the French and Russian revolutionaries, the Indian leaders showed extraordinary wisdom. Whether this view of the attitude is right or wrong, there is no doubt that no member of the old official order was punished for

having sided with the British, and some of them were even given higher positions in the new administration. Among these were some Muslims. Most Muslims in the administration, of course, went over to Pakistan, but some chose to remain in India, and were for that reason even more favoured than the old Hindu officials. Moreover, in the higher ranks of the civil service, the Muslims did not differ essentially from their Hindu colleagues. They were all Anglicized men with no strong association or loyalty which could tie them to any of the two traditional orders. Irrespective of their religious and social antecedents, these men formed one class, and in dealing with them one hardly had any feeling that they were either Hindus or Muslims. So the Muslims in the civil service did not get any differential treatment.

Thus the present position of the Muslims in the ministries and the civil service is due to a historical situation bequeathed by the British and unlikely to be continued or repeated. That is already more than plain, because it can be easily discovered that no new Muslim candidates are appearing for such posts, and none is in a probationary period. What has happened has happened, and it will soon be a thing of the past. In regard to the future it needs no very great prophetic insight to say that the Muslims, both out of their own choice and owing to the Hindu dislike of them, would not rise to high positions. In fact, most of them would prefer to lead a private life, instead of serving a Hindu regime in which they cannot feel at home and with which they are not in sympathy.

But I must also say that if the Muslims of India are now without prospects as a community and if they are in a sad position they must also bear their share of the responsibility and not make the Hindus alone culpable. Our mistakes and follies come home to roost, and that is as true of national as it is of personal life. The mistakes that the Muslims committed during the decades of the nationalist agitation are now recoiling on them. When they were basking in the sun of British favour, they did

not remember that one day that might cancel their right to Hindu favour.

I should like to elaborate this point. As soon as the nationalist movement got into its stride, the Muslim leaders began to play a curiously equivocal game, seemingly realistic and effective, but so only on a short-term assessment of their interests. The Indian Muslims hated the British with a hatred which was even more vitriolic than that of the Hindus, because it was they who had been deprived of an empire by the new conquerors. Yet, when they found themselves wooed by the same conquerors as a counterpoise to the Hindu nationalists, they could not resist the inveiglement and struck the bargain, a very Faustian one.

For the moment even we Hindus thought that they had been shrewd and stolen a march on us. They knew that their own battle was also being fought by the Hindus, and that in the event of a British withdrawal from India their share of the spoils was assured. In the meanwhile, it was not only *not* necessary to make sacrifices for the Muslim cause as against the British, but even profitable to make the best of both worlds. This game, played with unscrupulous boldness, succeeded for the time being and yielded all the immediate results expected from it. The creation of an independent state for the Muslims of India, or at all events for a majority of them, was the greatest achievement of the double-faced policy.

That has also been seen to be the only achievement. A colossal Machiavellian game of politics of the order attempted by the Muslims could not be played without grave moral and political risks, and the risks have now overtaken the Muslims completely both in India and in Pakistan. On the rank and file of the Muslims of India the opportunistic liaison with the British had a disastrous effect. So far as the British were concerned, it left one section unweaned from the barren and rancorous hatred, and made another pine for the ruling nation's favours. The British were, of course, ready to show or even shower

their favours so long as it served their interest to do so, but the Muslims forgot that the part of cat's-paw cannot be played, even if it is played with cynical opportunism, without being made, at one time or other, to pay the price.

In respect of the Hindus, on the other hand, the Muslims, being sure of British support, began to show an arrogance and an enmity which were never justified by any regard for Muslim interests, and which earned them the undying hatred of the Hindus. It added a new edge to the old Hindu hatred of the Muslims. It can be said that in the epoch of the nationalist agitation the Muslims were not only provocative, but also openly aggressive. During the Civil Disobedience movement of 1930-32 the Muslims of East Bengal, to give only a few instances, looted Hindu shops in Chittagong, attacked Hindu houses in the city of Dacca, and plundered and burnt Hindu homes over a belt of some twenty miles in length and about ten in width in my own district of Mymensingh.

All this created a chronic and endemic violence which lasted till the partition of India. In Dacca, while the Muslims knifed Hindus whenever they found them helpless, the Hindu boys, even schoolboys of fifteen, suddenly went out of their houses and came back after a little while to enjoy their dinner with the recollection of a Muslim murdered in stealth. All of them behaved as if they were werewolves.

I shall relate an incident which I have on good authority. In Dacca, on the Wari side, the railway line runs through a residential area. One day, on it, a young and very handsome Muslim boy was found to be lying, obviously murdered by a Hindu. An elderly Hindu widow, who lived in a nearby house and whose son had been murdered by the Muslims, saw the body, walked up to the railway line with a chopper, and hacked away the head of the boy to keep it as a trophy. Could head-hunters or scalp-hunters do better?

This violence went on with rising tempo to its crescendo in 1946 and 1947, and led to the colossal massacre of

1946 in Calcutta, which frightened the Bengali Hindus into believing that partition was the only means of release from the Muslim nightmare. The resignation to partition was both foolish and cowardly, but at the moment it seemed to be the height of wisdom.

The Muslims are now expiating for their short-sighted arrogance, which makes me observe that whatever clever people might say in defence of unscrupulousness in politics, and about its success, there is some power in the universe which sees to it that such cynicism does not pay, and that nothing but what is inherently right ever succeeds. Define it as you like, as theodicy or the justice of history, it is there, irrespective of any name. We see the operation of that power in the sad fate of the Muslims of India, both in the Hindu and in the Muslim state. What gave them victory in 1947 was not the opportunistic policy of their leaders, but their fanatical devotion to a cause which was a lost one in history. So, there is no escape for them today from that lost cause, and still less from the intolerable burden of fighting to the last for a lost cause.

Chapter 13

THE HALF-CASTE MINORITIES: GENETIC AND CULTURAL

IT is with the utmost reluctance that I write this chapter. The communities with which I am going to deal in it are the underdogs of Indian society, and no one would willingly give an impression of being harsh to them, far less do anything that would look like hitting a man who is down. As it is, they have enough to bear.

But I cannot leave them out, nor can I write about them with whole-hearted sympathy. It might be said that about

the Hindus too I have not written with unreserved sympathy. True, but I have criticized them as a Hindu myself, as a lone critic of the rest of the three hundred million, and the risks are all mine. In the case of those whom I am describing as half-castes, my criticism can seem to be prompted by the confidence given by the presence of the same millions behind me. It is not my habit to bark with a master at my back.

But I am compelled to write about them because they are all communities *in being* in India, and because they are also elements in the country's population which are still reactive in the ethnic and social evolution, and have not become merely sedimentary. Their influence is out of proportion to their relatively small numbers on account of some special circumstances. Besides, they illustrate the great difference that can be seen in regard to ethnic results between the Aryan and Muslim conquests on the one hand, and the European on the other. Both the former conquests deposited massive human elements, large in numbers, solid in culture, and assertive in their ways, but the European conquest created nothing which stands comparison with the previous deposits. This curious ineffectiveness of the European expansion in the ethnic sphere calls for an explanation, all the more because in those of culture and economic life the Western impact has certainly made a difference, and will make more. Yet on the ethnic evolution the same impact has been negligible: of minor significance for the Hindus and Muslims, and unfortunate for the new communities themselves. Moreover, they, or at least some of them, are a bad influence on the Hindus, both culturally and morally. Furthermore, their unfortunate plight illustrates an aspect of the winding up of European imperialism which those who are bragging about the end as an achievement are most anxious to conceal: that the products of the imperialism are being abandoned by those who produced them. Therefore what I am going to write will annoy the contemporary British anti-imperialists.

On the other hand, my sympathy for these communities is inhibited by the poverty of life they exhibit. It is this, and not their insignificance in numbers, which prevents my writing about them with full sympathy. In this they present a striking contrast to the Parsi community, which is also small but has nevertheless maintained a high quality of life as resident aliens. But there is something unnaturally shoddy and unhealthy about the half-caste communities, and no novelist even would like to deal with them unless he had a penchant for the decadent and the abnormal.

But perhaps I should first enumerate the communities which I am labelling as half-caste. As the chapter heading indicates. I have divided the ethnic elements created by the European expansion in India into two broad classes—the genetic half-castes and the cultural. The first group includes the communities in which there is an actual intermixture of European and pre-existing blood, mostly Hindu. The second is comprised of the converts to Christianity, in which the intermixture is not present.

This at first sight would seem to be a wholly arbitrary classification, for no one can be called a half-caste who does not have two racial or genetic strains in his heredity. But that precisely is not *my* definition of a half-caste in India. According to me, a half-caste in India, as perhaps everywhere else, is a psychological and cultural type, and not merely a zoological hybrid, though the genetic admixture has certainly played a part in predetermining and preconditioning his mental and cultural characteristics. Furthermore, the half-castes of India (and, I would repeat, of other countries also) are *not* the possessors of a composite culture, unless culture is defined in the very wide anthropological sense. They are not natural and healthy hybrids, racially or culturally, but, be they genetic hybrids or converts, are people who have given up their old culture without being able to adopt a new culture except in a weak and debased form. To put it even more plainly, the half-castes of India are, either

through birth or conversion, only a depressed offshoot of the conquering European nations, and they remained protégés of the European nations so long as their rule lasted. In an India politically dominated by the Hindus, it is this social and cultural status which is making the position of the communities I am speaking about very anamolous, and even dubious.

Nevertheless, it would not be advisable to disregard the genetic factor, for as between the different half-caste communities, it has determined the degree of 'half-casteness', if I might coin the derivative. For instance, Indian Christians do not exhibit the same degree of half-casteness as do the Eurasians. Again, the Indian Christians who belonged to the higher Hindu castes before their conversion show even fewer of these attributes, compared with the converts from the depressed or untouchable Hindu castes. There is a whole gamut of tones in the half-caste scale. Furthermore, the position of those who are half-caste both genetically and culturally is infinitely more difficult than that of those who are so only culturally. The first of these have almost completely burnt their boats, and are now looking for fords or swimming desperately to get back to the Hindu bank, while the others, even if they did not keep the boat-bridge standing, at least kept the boats.

I can now proceed to list the communities which I call half-caste, and I shall begin with those among whom there is undoubted admixture of European blood. The first injection of modern European blood began in India with the Portuguese conquest, mostly on the western coast of India, but partly also in Bengal. In Bengal, however, the half-castes of Portuguese origin did not remain distinct from the half-castes of British descent. They became one with the lower stratum of the Eurasian or Anglo-Indian society, a dark element distinguished from the dark Eurasians of British descent only by their Portuguese names. But in Goa and Mangalore people with Portuguese names

have remained generally speaking separate from the Eurasians.

I should explain here that the terms 'Indian' and 'Anglo-Indian' were introduced as official nomenclature for the natives of India and the Eurasians respectively by Lord Hardinge towards the close of his term of office as Viceroy. Before that the Hindus, and the Muslims as well, were called 'natives' by the British, and the mixed Indo-English breed 'Eurasians'. Both these terms had acquired pejorative associations and were felt as insulting by the communities concerned. So the new names were introduced. I have, however, reverted to the word 'Eurasian', because it avoids confusion with the older usage of the word 'Anglo-Indian', which meant an Englishman who was residing in India or had done so, and also because 'Eurasian' is a more accurate descriptive label.

Now, there is no doubt about the mixed type which is Indo-British. But the genetic element in the Indo-Portuguese breed is difficult to assess. It is always a queston how much European blood exists among the people of Goa and the Indian Christians of Mangalore, who bear Portuguese names. The name itself gives no clue, for it might have been taken by mere adoption as a client. It would seem, however, that intermixture of blood is virtually negligible among the Christians of the Mangalore region, whereas in Goa it certainly exists, though it is uncertain to what extent. But, irrespective of any actual intermixture of blood, the whole mental cast and cultural complexion of the Christians of Goa are those of a Mestizo population. In their social habits and institutions and way of living, the Goanese Christians became basically distinct from the Hindus, and it was not a question of the Christian religion alone. Therefore I am including the Christians of Goa among the genetic half-castes, keeping in mind the possibility that many of them might not have any Portuguese blood at all.

The products of the intermingling of British and Hindu or Muslim blood are the Eurasians properly so-called.

They are found all over India, but are mainly concentrated in the three big cities of Calcutta, Bombay, and Madras, with secondary concentrations in important railway centres and some of the hill-stations. By the criterion of colour the Eurasians or half-castes of British descent range from the pure European blond to dark brown, but the community as a whole is fair. The dark Eurasians are not looked upon as equals by the fair ones, and as a rule the fair marry among the fair, and the dark among the dark. Whenever an over-ambitious dark Eurasian marries a fair girl of the community, there is trouble, and there is unhappiness. Thus, within the Eurasian community, there is a contrasted selective breeding which is making the fair side fairer, and the dark side darker. The difference in complexion is a source of internal stress in the community.

Coming now to the cultural half-castes, that is to say, to the converts into Christianity and their descendants, they are far more heterogeneous than the Eurasians. The community of Indian Christians is divided up into sub-communities, between which there is neither intermarriage, nor even social intercourse. These sub-groups owe their existence to the differences among the churches and denominations which have converted them, and also to the previous status of the converted families in Hindu society.

Since I am concerned in this chapter only with those Indian Christians who can be described as half-caste according to my definition, I am not including in my account the oldest Christian community in India. It is formed of the Syriac Christians of Kerala or the former Princely State of Travancore. They came over from Syria when the Arabs conquered their country, and since their arrival in India they have been living here as colonists.

Thus the first group of Indians converted to Christianity that I have to mention here are the Roman Catholic Christians who live at and around Mangalore, all of whom

have Portuguese names. They are, of course, a product of the Portuguese conquest of Western India, and as such they should go with the Christians of Goa. In fact, these two groups of Roman Catholics have the same history and are very close to each other in ever way. Nevertheless, the Mangalore Christians do not look upon themselves as being the same kind of Christians as those from Goa. They even dislike the Goanese. A D'Souza, Mascarenhas, Pinto, or Lobo from Mangalore will not willingly marry among the De Souzas, Mascarenhases, Pintos, and Lobos from Goa. On the other hand, they do not like to be confused with the other Christians of India. They look upon themselves as a Catholic aristocracy even among other Catholics, not to speak of the other denominations. When one day talking to a lady from Mangalore, I described her as an Indian Christian, she indignantly protested: 'I am not an Indian Christian, I am a Catholic. Indian Christians are low-caste converts to Protestantism.'

All the Christian groups of India retain the mark of the caste system. This is exhibited as strongly by the Christians whom the lady looked upon as mere 'Indian Christians', as by her fellow-Catholics. They continue their caste status and pride of caste even in the generations born to Christianity and not merely converted to the new religion. For instance, a Bengali Christian who bears such surnames as Banerji, Chatterji, Mukherji, Bose, or Dutt will be very wary about a Bengali Christian who is a Biswas. Now, the son of an eminent Bengali Christian of Calcutta wanted to marry a girl with one of the lowly surnames—which are those of the low or depressed castes from which the converts came—and the father at first strongly objected, and his sister told us: 'After all, we are Brahmin.'

Let me begin with the Eurasians. In assessing their position, and indeed of both the groups of genetic half-castes, one must keep in mind not only the immediate background of British rule, but also the ancient Hindu

background. The Aryan Hindus had a horror of miscegenation, especially that kind of miscegenation in which a woman of the superior and dominant race married a native. They treated the offspring of such intermarriages with such contempt that even the products of these were left with a permanent sense of inferiority. It was as if an indelible bar sinister was not only painted on their escutcheon but branded on their forehead. Of course, this was natural in a community of Whites who were colonists among a dark and uncivilized native population.

The ancient Hindus showed another characteristic prejudice. They had even greater suspicion of the half-caste who pretended to be Arya and tried to behave like one. In the Mahabharata Yudisthira asks Bhishma, 'Grandfather! How can we recognize a half-caste who is born of the seed of a man of inferior caste in the womb of a woman of superior caste, but who looks or dresses like an Arya?' Bhishma replies, 'The baseness of a man born of miscegenation is easily detected from his un-Aryan conduct; indiscriminate habits, cruelty, non-observance of rituals proclaim the low origin of these men; . . . they can never hide their baseness; just as tigers and other animals cannot give up their nature, these men too cannot . . . mere knowledge of the sacred books cannot remove the baseness of a base man.' So it goes on.

Contemporary Hindus have certainly not outgrown this ancient prejudice, and no Hindu can, for he remains basically genetic in all his social outlook: a believer in blood and birth. Moreover, he was not taught to think differently by his British rulers. They displayed, and even paraded, a good deal of the Hindu contempt for the half-castes they themselves had created. They had the same horror of miscegenation. Thus it happened that in Calcutta no woman of pure English birth who had married a Bengali in England and come over to her husband's country, could ever have any social life among the British of the city. As for a man of Eurasian origin, it was virtually impossible for him to marry among the pure

British. He could not even mix with them in society on an equal footing. The British in India showed yet another similarity with the Hindus in thinking that the Eurasian who knew his place and kept to it was a better man than the Eurasian who wanted to pass off as an Englishman.

Even Kipling could not write about the Eurasians with complete sympathy, though they were the genetic product of British imperialism. Not that he did not see good qualities in them—read his description of the Eurasian boys at St Xavier's school at Lucknow; but he also knew that there was another side to the matter. So, while giving them their due, he also made Kim cut in with a snort when Mahbub Ali spoke of the young sahibs of St Xavier's:

'Not all! Their eyes are blued and their nails are blackened with low-caste blood, many of them. Sons of *mehteranees*—brothers-in-law to the *bhungi* (sweeper).'

All that the British in India admitted was that, having brought this class into existence in the country, they had a duty to it and were under an obligation to provide suitable livelihood for its members, which was, of course, like the behaviour and conduct of all honourable men towards their natural sons. Although it cannot be said that in this matter the British authorities in India quite took their cue from Louis XIV, Charles II, or even Lord Chesterfield, they did give the Eurasians every help they could in obtaining employment matched to their outlook and aptitudes. The community as a whole did not possess much ambition, nor did it show any high degree of ability or intelligence. Generally speaking, the Eurasians were like feeble replicas of the British lower middle-class white-collar workers. But they had stronger outdoor interests than the Hindus. So they were given employment in the Post and Telegraph Department, in the railways, in the Survey Department, and partly also in the engineering and medical services in the lower grades, besides being appointed to minor administrative posts in the

secretariats. Outside government service they were appointed in mercantile houses and British shops, and their women, when they worked, had almost a monopoly of the posts of stenotypists and saleswomen in the British offices and shops.

This framework of their economic life naturally determined their outlook and also the quality of their personal life. It was very dull, commonplace, and even vulgar. Even when they rose to higher levels mentally, they never achieved distinction, depth, or originality. At best they showed a conventional and well-intentioned goodness.

But the curious thing is that despite this ordinariness their life was not free from its pain. In India even the most unexciting life has its bitterness, and in their way the Euarsians were eaten into by spleen. While British rule lasted they had no means of knowing what the Hindus felt towards them, and they did not suffer from Hindu contempt. But they felt all the insult of the British attitude, and nursed a standing grievance. There hung over their consciousness the shadow of a disinherited life, cast by the knowledge that all their potentialities were limited by something over which they had no control, namely, their birth. This fostered in all Eurasians a resentment against the British, which often became strong enough to be sullenness, affecting the mood and temper of the whole community.

Yet they could not allow themselves to be driven by this sentiment into anti-British behaviour. They knew equally well that their position in India was dependent on the British. So they developed a psychological dichotomy, in which their resentment against the local British came to be mixed with the impulse, which became a habit, to look up to the British in India as protectors and to remain abjectly dependent on them. To this was added another psychological maladjustment. Towards the people of the country, especially to the Hindus, they behaved with an arrogance which was very stupid. But, of course, it was intelligible: it was derived half from the assurance

of British protection, and half from the consciousness that they were partly of the ruling race, or in any case nearer to the ruling race than to the Hindus. So they also addressed Bengali gentlemen in Calcutta as 'Babu'. The English have now given up this form of address, but the half-castes still call us 'Babu'.

All these strands of feelings and ideas, in their combination of a crushing awareness of inferiority, rancour, and the egregious race pride which they displayed towards the natives of the country made for an unbalanced collective personality. This personality often found expression in behaviour, which was not wholly normal even in British days when the Eurasians had a sense of special protection. Although the community as a whole was most effectually defended by its mediocrity, which engendered sluggishness and prevented clashes, its basic instability also spilled out.

Young Eurasians, both boys and girls, showed a weak and degenerate form of the exuberant animal spirits of the English schoolboy and girl. The lack of balance lasted until the young people were overtaken in due time by the general insipidity of the class. To young Eurasian girls, more especially, the instability gave a deceptive beauty, like that of a rime-covered, but canker-eaten, moss rose. This type of beauty with its appearance of fragility and evanescence attracted some true Europeans with a romantic temper, because what they took it for was European feminine charm polarized by an exotic light, but in a direction which was opposite to that of Creoles. But if any of them was drawn by it into a permanent man-woman relationship, he very soon found reason to regret it. Even before age and married life had congealed the Eurasian wives into their natural commonplaceness, they showed themselves as women with whom it was impossible to live. They were either lifeless wax dolls without a mind but capable, nevertheless, of looking frighteningly unhappy, or demons driven by a heady, but very volatile, essence of sensuality with no body. Every moment the

unfortunate man would feel like strangling the creature out of exasperation, yet every moment he would also realize the utter impossibility of hurting anything so flimsy, so much like an ethereal embodiment of all that was frail and feather-brained in womankind.

These are the antecedents which have to be kept in mind in trying to assess the life of the Eurasians in present-day India. Unfortunately for them, another and a very painful antecedent has also to be recalled. In the British days it was the women of this class who mostly supplied prostitutes for the White Man in India, and they were concentrated in the big cities. In Calcutta the quarter in which these women lived was known as Kareya. It had rows of *maisons de tolérance*. These bawdy-houses with their bead, lace, or net curtains and glimpses of tawdry bric-à-brac, suggested a sad meretricity such as is conveyed in phrases like *filles de joie et de tristesse*, and the impression was heightened by the sudden appearance at a door, or a window from which a canary cage was hanging, of a young woman with a thin but hectic face and sunken eyes. More unfortunately still, there was a large number of amateur practitioners in the community, how many it was difficult to say, but certainly not too few.

Even down to the twenties of this century the Hindus hardly cultivated Eurasian prostitutes, professional or amateur. These were considered above them, and, besides, the Hindus had not as yet learnt to enjoy Eurasian *putinrie*. There is a style and genius in prostitution as there is in all other human activities. But with the growth of external Westernization among the Hindus, which has been increasing in the last forty years or so, the fashion of going to Eurasian prostitutes has also developed substantially, and it has to be admitted that there is an innate appropriateness in this. A Bengali in trousers was likely to look very incongruous in the arms of a traditional Bengali prostitute, who had the Bengali woman stamped all over herself; moreover, the man was also bound to feel uncomfortable. And to indulge the new

yearning for drinking strong spirits was even more difficult with them, for in the company of a Bengali prostitute, who had no nerves to speak of, it had to be joint drinking and vomiting, and vomiting and drinking, all the time until the power to do either was lost in stupor. Drinking with Eurasian girls, on the other hand, was likely to be more in the cocktail party style.

In addition, there was a whole complex of hard-set predispositions and sensibilities which came into play in making Eurasian prostitutes fashionable among the Hindus. For one thing, the Hindu debauchees, especially the hard-boiled ones, had a feeling that the Hindu prostitutes were not piquant enough. This was quite an old idea, and before it worked in favour of the Eurasian prostitute it had been helping the Muslim. In an old Bengali book the major domo of a rich man says to him, 'Babu, do not go to a Hindu whore, but only to Mussulman wenches, because you will get more fun out of women who eat garlic and onions than from those who do not.' Not even the most fanatical Hindu vegetarian thought that this type of food improved prostitutes, whom they wanted to be game.

Secondly, the Hindu women in this profession tended to be homely. They would not go beyond certain limits. If, in addition, any of them came to develop some sort of affection for a regular customer or took what Bengali gay dogs and the more refined police officers of Calcutta euphemistically abbreviated in the Roman alphabet as P.N.—which is quite correctly translated as 'lover for love' —she showed a dangerous tendency to behave like a wife, and became capable of thinking that the most impassioned declaration of love was to say, 'Have a handful of rice before you go, for my sake!' In a certain District town in West Bengal the houses of ill-fame bore signboards: 'Dinner and bed for gentlemen who have to be in town overnight.'

Thirdly, by going to prostitutes of European descent, the Hindus also got satisfaction in the patriotic and nation-

alistic way. It could be felt as a form of revenge for political subjection if they could pay back the humiliation to the women of the ruling stock. This inclination had also grown in the Muslim period and was easily transferred to the Eurasians who were of the ruling race, at least on the father's side of the family. The Hindus like to satisfy their sensuality and their nationalism at the same time, and some of them even read the 'sexy' novels now coming from the West in paper-backs for the double pleasure of being titillated and coming on fresh proofs of the depravity of the White races. Before considerate European and American novelists began to meet the demand with specially written material, even *Anna Karenina* was read by some Hindus in this spirit. A very recent practical development along these lines has also to be noted. Most Indians have already acquired an uneasy feeling that the Americans are going to be their future political masters. This is necessarily having its reaction on their sensual appetite. The Hindu sensual *avanguardisti* have already begun to boast about their delectable experiences with American women, with what truth I am unable to say.

Fourthly, just as there was on the one side a moral satisfaction to be had from going to prostitutes of European stock, there was, on the other, escape from a certain kind of moral qualm. Muslim and European women did not confront the Hindu sensualist with the unpleasant prospect of having a sudden pain shooting through his pleasure by being given glimpses of the degradation and suffering inflicted by Mrs Warren's profession, which the Hindu prostitutes at times could give. I shall tell an anecdote about this.

One evening a friend of mine was going along a street in north Calcutta, notorious as a disreputable quarter. He saw the usual groups of bold and tittering persons at the doors. But at one in a rather quiet stretch, he saw only one very young girl standing timidly. Something in her air made my friend look back after he had gone a

few steps. He saw her lips parting, and as he expected the simpering solicitation, an infinitely more dangerous whisper floated across the still atmosphere: 'Dada Babu,* give me something. I have not eaten the whole day, and my landlady will not give me food until I have handed her my earnings.' He walked back, put what he had with him in her hand, and walked away again with an exercise of the will. Though there are people who would, even in such a situation, insist on value for money or even a little more, there are also men who can think that one opportunity for sexual satisfaction is well lost for an act of compassion. But it is unreasonable to expect such sacrifices to be made continually or by everybody. So it was wiser in every way to avoid such risks by going to women who could not put lust and compassion at war.

Lastly, the cultivation of Eurasian prostitutes had a snob value, and to be able to command only Hindu women was looked upon as the sign of a third-rate rake's progress.

All these factors taken together began to turn the attentions of the Hindus to Eurasian girls. Another friend of mine satirized the emerging fashion in alliterative Bengali verse, '*Kareya bareya bara,*' which meant: 'Kareyas [that is, the Eurasian prostitutes of the quarter of that name in Calcutta] were very fine.' But even more than the professional it was the amateur Eurasian girls who exercised the stronger lure on the Hindus.

The new fashion made its appearance in the twenties, and by the thirties was well established. Pioneers in this exploration were some very rich Muslims and Hindus, especially young men of the wealthy Marwari community, the longest range of whose Westernization at that epoch was the Eurasian girl. Regular touts wandered about in Chowringhee and nearby streets, especially at Whiteaways Corner, and offered to take well-dressed and prosperous-looking Hindu youths to 'Anglo-Indians' in well-known

* 'Dada Babu' literally means 'Brother and Master', but its respectfully tender suggestion is impossible to translate.

Eurasian streets. With independence the Hindus have, of course, attained the status of White clients, without superseding them.

It is this Hindu eyeing of the girls of the Eurasian community which constitutes the greatest future danger to it, socially and morally. In India every ruling power has in the past showed its particular taste in women. The Moguls, for instance, preferred Kashmiri beauties, the British Muslim and Aboriginal girls, and the Hindus would rather have women of European descent, after they had outgrown their earlier taste for Muslim mistresses. The more risky part of such attentions to a politically and socially depressed community is that they seem to evoke a readiness to be obliging, and by and by it becomes unable to resist the money and power of the rulers. Its members become all the more responsive because they think that they can thus exert a backstair influence in the interest of their community. The laxness already shown by the community of Eurasians in meeting the sensual demands of the Hindus has risked the position even of its honest women. There is a general tendency among the Hindus who are on the sensual quest to look upon all Eurasian girls, irrespective of their conduct, as fair prey.

As it happens, the very figure of these girls has become a sort of emblem of their destiny. They have a characteristic physical appearance, which is top heavy. While, even when not plump, they have full upper limbs and equally full nether limbs down to the calves, they exhibit a thinness from the calves to the ankle which is wholly unexpected. This part of their shins is extraordinarily slender, and since they heighten the gazelle-like effect by wearing high-heeled shoes they seem to be always on the point of toppling over. To the onlooker they give a curious sensation suggestive of their luscious appeal to the Hindus and precarious foothold in the Hindu order.

In other respects the Eurasians have neither much to fear nor much to expect from the Hindus, who are quite

willing to leave them alone in their own half-caste world. The community is definitely not under suspicion like the Muslims, even though in the past it formed part of the British ruling order and treated Hindus badly. Their former arrogance seems to have been forgotten and forgiven, which, given the cast of the Hindu mind, is to be expected. What a Hindu mostly wants to inflict on an enemy, national or personal, is moral humiliation. Once defeat is accepted on that plane, a Hindu will neither kill, nor persecute, nor even harm the one-time enemy's interests, and the Eurasians have accepted defeat.

But the main obstacle in the way of a stable and psychologically adjusted relationship between the Hindus and the Eurasians is not the attitude of the new rulers, but of themselves. The British affiliation has not been blotted out of the memory and mind of the Eurasians by the disappearance of British political power. When the British withdrew in 1947 many of the Eurasians felt strongly that they could not break the tie and that, for better for worse, their lot was cast finally with the British, and so they chose to emigrate to Great Britain. I have conflicting reports of their experience there.

In India, on the other hand, there is undoubted maladjustment at all levels and in all circles, and the presence of a strong but suppressed resentment can be felt. Their leaders, like those of the Muslims, feel compelled to say that they are as good Indians as any Hindu could be. But in the public utterances of the same leaders there is an undertone of continual grievance. In political life they are as a rule in the opposition, constituting a feeble element in it, and voicing the small grievances of a small and weak community.

Besides, there is a strange unreality in their claim to be Indian, which is revealed very significantly by their assertion that English is one of the languages of India and the mother tongue of true Indians. That alone is enough to show what their title to be Indian is worth. I am sure that if they wanted to be regarded as Indians in the sense

English is an Indian language the Hindus would concede that at once.

Observing them even from a distance one can see that there is in their behaviour a latent anti-Hindu bias, and at times something more—a disposition to find pleasure in the failures of the Hindus in politics or in economic activity. They seem to watch these failures with a leer. With that goes a listless resignation to their own lot in the Hindu order. They know, even when they do not proclaim it, that no high sphere of action is open to them in their country, and they know also that even in the worldly way they must rest satisfied with very ordinary opportunities and vocations. There is on their faces an unnatural gravity, sometimes breaking out in irritability and peevishness. But the general and dominant expression is one of infinite dejection at suffering which is not fully understood by them. This is very painful to an outside observer.

I have now to consider the half-castes of Goa, who were taken over by India at the end of 1961. So long as Portuguese rule lasted, their lot was infinitely happier than that of the Eurasians. The first reason for this was that they had a homeland of their own, in which they were concentrated and dominant, and in which there were no social and cultural clashes. Between them and the Hindus of Goa there did not exist that antithesis and antipathy which was present in the Eurasian-Hindu relationship in India. Even those Goanese who had to live in India and felt the unsettling contagion of the communal hatreds could and did go to Goa for rest cure and found it.

Secondly, they owed their peace to a sort of *pax Romana*, to Latin imperialism which was radically different from the Anglo-Saxon. It had no guilty conscience, no contempt for subject peoples, no repugnance to cultural proselytization. Whatever might have been the initial ruthlessness of the converting process, once the 'auto-da-fé' was gone through, the result was happy. I do

not think that any other group of Asiatics converted to Christianity succeeded so thoroughly in naturalizing themselves within a Christian church which was not of their own creation as did the Christians of Goa in the Roman Catholic church. Even now it is in their church-going that the Goanese are seen at their best and most respectable. They were no doubt priest-ridden, but hidebound as the clericalism was, it was none the less a stabilizing, tranquillizing, and dignifying influence on their otherwise trivial life.

The upshot was that through the operation of a colonialism of the Roman type in the medium of Portuguese rule, the Christians of Goa, irrespective of any intermixture of blood, came to be constituted into a homogeneous society which might be called a tropical and Mestizo extension of the Christian order of the Mediterranean. Naturally, in monsoon-swept Konkan, it became different in a number of outward aspects, but at the same time it became even more different from Hindu life across the Ghats; as dissimilar indeed as was the alluvium of the coastal strip from the timeless rocks of the Deccan. No where else in India did any group of Indians converted to Christianity become so alienated from the original society and culture.

Were it possible to hope for a miniature continental drift in our times, it would have been best for everybody concerned if in 1947 Goa had cut itself from India and floated away towards the sugar islands of the south, to become a Madeira or Azores of the Indian Ocean. There the Goanese would have lived their out-of-date life, but still their own life, irredeemably trivial, yet kept together by the steel-frame of Jesuitical Romanism. They would have lived, combining courtship with *marriage de convenance;* attendance of the mass with the drinking of *vino di pasto* and even stronger spirits—all duty-free; Gregorian chants with Konkani folk-melodies, in a *litanie de la Sainte Vièrge* of their own. They would have been *devôts* and heart-free, light or even light-headed, but they

would have been themselves, neither vicious, nor vulgar. In going to their island it would have been possible for a man to think that he was setting out on a *voyage pour Cythère*:

> To happy Converts, bosom'd deep in vines
> Where slumber Abbots, purple as their wines:
> To Isles of fragrance, lilly-silver'd vales,
> Diffusing languor in the panting gales:
> To lands of singing, or of dancing slaves,
> Love-whisp'ring woods, and lute-resounding waves.

But this little colony of tropical Mediterraneanity was wrecked on the granite mass of India, which acted on it like the black magnetic rock of Sinbad.

Even under British rule, India was a country of temptation and fall for the Goanese, more especially the evil city of Bombay, which in recent years has become the main source of the low and degraded Westernization which is flooding India: the Indian film being its typical product. Though Bombay still has a ballast of hard-headed and business-like Gujaratis and also of very conservative Maharashtrians in its hold, its saloons and upper decks are crowded with an Anglicized set which is counterfeit at most levels and debased at the lowest. The part of Bombay which is active socially and culturally is this pseudo-cosmopolitan one.

It was in this city that the Goanese developed the pattern of their existence in India. What took them there was, of course, search for more money and better openings than were available in the small colony. They found both there, but not in walks where they could become better and stronger socially or personally. With few exceptions honest employment was lowly or dull. Very large numbers, both men and women, worked as domestic servants. The men were much sought after as cooks, owing to a gastronomical reputation built on highly seasoned dishes which Indians regarded as English and Europeans as Eastern. The women in these situations some-

times made extra money by ministering to other needs of their well-to-do masters than mere nursing of the children or scrubbing of the utensils. Women from Goa were much more numerous among the prostitutes of Bombay, and their importance in this profession gave to the word 'Goanese' an association which Indians found alluring and the people from Goa insulting. Their attractions were felt even in distant Delhi, where pimps tempted fastidious northern Hindus by holding out the promise of *Bombay-ki chhukri*, a wench from Bombay.

Those Goanese who did not sink into menial or disreputable life obtained the kind of employment open to the Eurasians, and became in fact a sort of inferior Eurasians adopting their dress and manner of life. The special lines of these Eurasianized Goanese were catering and playing music in the restaurants and hotels. Generally speaking, they remained satisfied with these modest opportunities, and spent their spare time playing cards and drinking. But drunkenness was not a vice with their menfolk as it was among the Eurasians. With all their fondness for strong spirits they never succumbed to these, and despite their softness in other matters they had a hard resistant core in regard to alcohol.*

But some Goanese, especially those domiciled in India, also went in for higher education and secured well-paid employment either in government service or mercantile houses. When they held such positions they usually established relations with the Anglicized circles of Bombay, Parsi or Hindu, and in the olden days also with the local British civil servants and business men. But even when well-placed they were distinguishable from the Parsis and Hindus in the same social stratum by a certain diffidence,

* Even the fanatically prohibitionist Hindu Government of India has been compelled to respect the fondness for alcohol of the Goanese. Mr Nehru has given a solemn assurance that prohibition will not be introduced in Goa. One fails to understand why.

as if their employment and position were too fine for them. They lost their naturalness and equilibrium, and became somewhat like a dependent social element, while the more ambitious and able developed an inclination to become adventurers. At best the Goanese in India became epiphytes, and at worst parasites.

When India became independent a client order like the Goanese could hardly be expected to act otherwise but to transfer their vassalage to the new Hindu ruling class, and they did this with greater success than the Eurasians, for, previously, they had showed no contempt for the Hindus, and when in good positions they had even established personal contacts with Anglicized Indians. With that they also developed a violent anti-Portuguese feeling. Until Goa was annexed the Hindu ruling order had its motive in encouraging and even spoiling these 'anti-imperialists' with Portuguese names. But now they seem to have sunk into the obscurity from which they emerged so far as public life is concerned.

But if India has been a degrading influence on the two half-caste communities of Eurasians and Goanese, they have been no less regrettable an influence on the Hindus, and continue to be that. In saying this I do not have in mind at this point of the argument the sad fact about their womenfolk: that they are Liliths to the Hindus, though that too debases sensuality in two ways, by making it a cowardly assault on the reputation and morals of weak communities which cannot resist the money, power, and lust of the dominant order; and by removing the inhibitions which, among the Hindus themselves, safeguard a sort of honour among lechers. By making sensuality easier to satisfy and more piquant in the satisfaction, the two communities show themselves as the seducers of the Hindus.

However, regrettable as this is, not very much less regrettable is the temptation that the Eurasians and the Goanese hold out to the Hindus in the public sphere, when they are in high and respectable positions. As instru-

ments of the Hindu Government, they are always ready to go the extra mile in obliging their employers, and thus help the natural Hindu inclination to abuse power. When holding positions in the administration with executive jurisdiction, the half-castes will accommodate their Hindu chiefs in a manner which the Hindus, even with their general servility to authority, will not adopt. This is natural because the Eurasians and the Goanese have their past to live down.

More especially, the Goanese, and the Eurasians up to a point, show a tendency to fall in with the most fanatical outbursts of Hindu nationalism, and overdo the chauvinism. To illustrate this I shall give the example of a Goanese or at least a man of partial Goanese descent who holds the exalted position of a Cardinal of the Roman Catholic Church. At the time of the border fighting with China he was attending an Oecumenical Council in Rome, and from there he issued a statement asking Indians to support their Government in the war against the Chinese. A little later he addressed the Pope on this subject and declared that God had 'drawn good' from the crisis in India. I wonder who in India expected him to intervene in a purely political quarrel, and I should think that the God of the Christians does not find much to choose between two nations of mere heathens. In any case, the Curia might have told him that the days of the bishops with maces were gone, and in our time a Christian priest, even though a Prince of the Church, was expected not to leave it solely to Mahatma Gandhi the Hindu to preach the message of Jesus.

These men bring no accession of strength to any Hindu cause, and I dare say they think fit to intervene more in the interest of their community than of the Hindus. But they do fortify the Hindu tendency to be self-righteous and bellicose, and to employ a dependent community to serve their special interests. I do not think that the choice of a Goanese for commanding the air operations against Goa was a mere coincidence. In the more exalt-

ed circles of Indian political life these men of half-caste origins in executive positions reinforce, to put it in the words of de Tocqueville, *'ce goût natural que les princes médiocres ont toujours pour la valetaille'*. It is distressing to have to contemplate a whole community in the position of a Tabaqui to the Hindu Shere Khan.

They are almost as undesirable in the educational system, in which they are fairly numerous. Their facility in a particular kind of English has given them this position. They are found more especially in the schools for the Indian Christians and Eurasians, to which it has become a fashion to send Hindu children whom their parents hope to see in good position in the administration or the armed forces. Perhaps the Goanese and Eurasian teachers are more efficient than the general run of Hindu teachers in a narrowly technical way, but they cannot exercise any moral leadership over their pupils nor strengthen the Hindu character, owing to the fact that the communities themselves have no very great moral stature. They might well be compared to the Greek slaves who taught young Romans, but the Greeks at least knew the Greek language, the half-castes do not know the language I call English. It can even be said that by looking upon these men and women as the guardians of the language in India the Anglicized Hindus expose the weakness of their own Anglicism. Certain teachers even get into the habit of spoiling the children of high officials and other influential persons, flattering them and their parents.

The members of the half-caste communities are also a bad influence on cultural activities when they are allowed to play a part or have a hand in them, and some of them are in this field for what qualification it is difficult to say. The ruling class in India should have realized that persons of half-caste origin were likely to be far weaker as cultural instructors than as educators. But many Anglicized Hindus do regard them as exponents of European culture, especially European music. This is also a proof of the superficiality of their Westernization.

Those of us who date from an older generation would rather have nothing to do with European culture than go to these men and women for initiation into it. It has to be remembered that these communities, in spite of their genetic association with Europeans, never played any role in the Westernization of the Hindus or in the creation of modern Indian culture, which was an attempt to fuse the best in India with the best from the West. The only Eurasian who can in any sense be regarded as an influence on this culture, and that too at second hand, was Derozio, a teacher of English literature in Calcutta in the early part of the nineteenth century. The new culture which was created in India under the impact of the West was the work of the Hindus, and mostly Bengali Hindus. The half-caste communities knew nothing about Hindu culture, perhaps not much more about Western culture, and they took no interest whatever in the new culture after it had been created. They remained wholly outside the pale of all cultural activities, and they still remain there.

It was only when they came in contact with Anglicized Hindus and had to maintain a position of equality with them that the members of these communities acquired cultural interests. This would not have done much harm unless some half-caste persons had developed intellectual, artistic, and literary pretensions, which made them dangerous to those Hindus who associated with them, and a cultural association seems to be growing between them and the Anglicized ruling class. This is unhealthy, and if it develops further is bound to be injurious, because it is just in the cultural sphere that these men are most shoddy and counterfeit.

The basic reality which the Hindu patrons of these half-caste intellectual adventurers forget is that no authentic cultural effort can come from those who have no solid culture themselves, and to this poverty the half-caste intellectuals and writers are condemned by the very fact of their origin. Thus, if these men are freaks or sports, their works are *tours de force*, and both are often medio-

cre. The elementary truth that no fruit can be better than the tree has come to be forgotten in their case. If the participation of these intellectuals has not done much perceptible injury as yet it is only because India today is some sort of a cultural vacuum. Our contemporary culture is protected against half-caste adulteration by its own bankruptcy. Insolvents can afford to be careless about money.

I shall now pass on to consider the Indian Christians, whom I have described as cultural half-castes. In regard to them, too, one has to keep in mind the original Hindu attitude towards those who gave up one religion to embrace another, and in addition the attitude of the British rulers towards conversion to Christianity. Both were in their way hostile or at least unsympathetic. The Hindus as believers in the genetic principle for all human activities, including the religious, never had any respect for conversion or converts. They would not convert others themselves, nor would they approve of conversion by others.

Naturally, they would also look upon those who went over from their religion and society to another as renegades, prompted either by fear or greed. The adoption of a religion to which a man was not born but which he preferred from conviction, was something a Hindu would never admit as sincere or honourable. It would always be set down to some worldly motive.

After independence there was a great clamour in India against the missionaries, who were accused of political mischief. There was a strong demand for putting an end to missionary activities, which could always be represented as political on account of the Hindu's habit of looking on religion as a form of social organization. The present government of India could not, of course, stultify itself by denying religious freedom, which is guaranteed by the constitution. But in certain parts of India partial restrictions have been imposed on new missionary activities

and on conversion unless the candidates are above a certain age.

On the other hand, the British Government in India in the early days was against missionary activities, because it thought that foreign rule could be maintained here only by respecting the beliefs, traditions, and institutions of the native inhabitants. This opposition to the missionaries did not, of course, continue, but the authorities were never very sympathetic to them, and were never enthusiastic about conversion. There was not even equality between the official clergy in India, the members of the Ecclesiastical Establishment, and the missionaries, who were regarded as an inferior order. The Church of England, except in its missionary extension, never concerned itself with native souls. As Kipling said of the regimental chaplains: 'Whenever the Church of England dealt with a human problem she was very likely to call in the Church of Rome.' The rivalry in the pastorship of heathenish flocks did not go very far. That, too, was indicated by Kipling. Here is an example—in the dialogue between Father Victor and Colonel Creighton over the education of Kim:

Father Victor: Bad luck to Bennett [the Anglican chaplain]! He was sent to the front instead o' me. Doughty certified me medically unfit. I'll excommunicate Doughty if he comes back alive! Surely Bennett ought to be content with——

Col. Creighton: Glory, leaving you the religion. Quite so! As a matter of fact I don't think Bennett will mind.

So between them the clergy of the Establishment and the missionaries worked out a nice division of labour, and after that they saw as little of each other as possible. One day, when I was young, I saw a gaitered canon with a missionary Father of the High Church; judging by the expressions on their faces as they talked, I could have taken them for Lucifer and Jesus on the high mountain.*

* I had not then read either Trollope or Hugh Walpole.

So both conversion and the converts were left in the keeping of the missionaries, and the Anglican Church remained free to look upon itself as an instrument of the imperium, and to wield the civil sword to restrain the stubborn and evildoers. But even in the hands of the missionaries conversion did not long remain a simple religious activity. Soon a social motivation came to reinforce the earlier religious motive. Quite early in its history there was a social shift in the history of missionary enterprise. At first those who came forward to seek conversion were the more earnest among high-caste Hindus, who had received a good education and were repelled by the gross idolatry and superstition of their own religion. But this came to an end with the appearance of a new form of Hindu monotheism, and, as education spread, the readiness to adopt Christianity, instead of increasing, decreased. Sir John Strachey, in his book on Indian administration—which is a classic on the subject—noted this. 'There has been no apparent connexion', he wrote, 'between the increase in the number of Christians and the progress of education. The effect of high English education on the religious beliefs of educated Hindus has doubtless been great, but it has had little tendency to make them Christian.' This was natural, though: the same education gave to the Hindus the notion of patriotism and also historical consciousness, which drew on the works of the European Orientalists to strengthen the loyalty to Hinduism.

The work of conversion was therefore transferred to different fields, where it became as much a movement of social reclamation as one of religious reform. I have already referred to the conversion of the aboriginals. Within the limits of Hindu society the missionary activity concerned itself more and more with the low castes, the depressed classes, who resented their condition or were taught to do so. Those of them who wanted a rise in the social scale and better opportunities in life adopted Christianity, so that they might get not only equal treat-

ment but also the protection of the ruling race through the missionaries of the same race.

But the power of the caste system is such that the Hindus from the low castes who embraced Christianity did not raise themselves to a higher level, but on the contrary brought down the religion to their level. This also was noted by Strachey. As he put it: 'Judged by even a low standard, the religion of the great majority of the native Christians, especially those of southern India, is Christianity little more than name. There are many noble exceptions, but it cannot be professed that Indian Christians have gained for themselves, as a rule, an exceptional measure of respect either among their own countrymen or among Europeans.'

In this, the conversion to Christianity offered a radical contrast to that to Islam. Islam, too, spread largely among the lower classes of Hindu society, but these classes never showed the weakness and dependence which was characteristic of the Indian Christians. I have lived among the Muslim peasants of East Bengal, whom one would hardly call civilized in any high sense, but at their most primitive they showed a dignity in which even the Muslim aristocracy did not surpass them. I suppose this is to be attributed to the fact that Islam, a political religion, not only brought a new faith, but also a new political status. Under British rule in India, on the other hand, the Christians remained as much a subject population as the Hindus. I have heard that even in the churches in the old days the Indian Christian congregation could not sit with the European congregation. The consciousness of racial superiority on which British rule in India rested was not cancelled by Christianity. On the contrary, the British rulers felt happy if Christianity did not infuse arrogance into the converts from Hinduism, and they attached the greatest possible importance to the saying that blessed are the poor in spirit.

The attitude of the rulers, coming in the wake of the force of the caste system, made Indian Christians humble

and diffident as a class. But among the Indian Christians themselves there was, as I have also pointed out, a good deal of difference in outlook and status due to their former position in Hindu society. This can be said to be particularly true of the best Christian families of Calcutta. They were and remain indistinguishable from other Bengalis of the same education and position. They never were very enthusiastic about going over to a foreign style of living, and preferred to live like Bengali gentlemen, which they were.

I shall give an amusing example of this from my knowledge. A Bengali Christian from one of these Calcutta families was working in Delhi some years ago, and he lived with his wife in the house of an Indian Christian priest in one of the churches of New Delhi. This Bengali gentleman did not want to forget that he was one, and after dinner every evening he smoked his long-piped hookah on the lawn. It was, of course, much more expensive and elegant than any contraption in the way of smoking used by the padre, who was a more typical Indian Christian, but the sound of the hubble-bubble (the word is onomatopoeic) got on his nerves. So one evening he shouted to my friend to stop, refusing to turn the other ear to the noise. No attention was, of course, paid to this. So, in revenge, he kept the alarm clock on from midnight to about three in the morning, even taking the trouble to sit up to wind the timepiece when it ran down. In a sense this padre was right, and his fanaticism was in the right place, for among the Hindus—whether he knew it or not—behaviour is the more important part of religion, and unless one resisted Hindu behaviour at the outset the Hindu camel was likely to usurp the whole Christian tent before anybody could do anything about it. I shall presently speak about this danger, which seems to be growing in the epoch of independence.

This loyalty to the ways of the country was not confined to the upper-class Indian Christians only. It was shown to a greater or lesser degree by all classes of converts to

Christianity in British India. This made it easier for the Christians to live with the Hindus without creating serious maladjustments, and for the same reason they never became as alienated from the country's culture as were the Goanese. On the other hand, it also exposed them to the social discriminations operative in Indian society, and also to the contempt of the Hindus so far as the converts from the lower castes were concerned. This contempt was even accentuated by the conversion, which for the Hindus was combined religious, social, cultural, and political apostasy. The result was that for protection against the Hindu attitudes the Indian Christians remained abjectly dependent on the missionaries, and developed all the traits of a client class, except in a few families of high standing.

This is as apparent today as it was in the past. In one sense, the feeling of helplessness and inferiority has increased, owing to the fact that the rulers of the country are now Hindus. In an India which is independent, the Christians have become even more dependent on their churches, in which there is a stiffening of the White missionaries and clergy, and without these White men the Indian Christians would feel completely abandoned even in their own country. The great majority of them lead their etiolated life in the shade, and no sun invigorates them. There is something diffident and even pitiably dependent about them. I notice this in any large gathering of Indian Christians. They do not seem to be at ease. One might say that all of them are sitting timidly on the edge of the chair in the Hindu living-room.

In spite of this there are fewer adventurers among the Indian Christians than among the Goanese settled in India. But they are also unadventurous in their ways. They have their own type of goodness, which inclines towards the wishy-washy. Therefore when holding executive appointments they show an over-attentiveness to their Hindu superiors, and when higher in the bureaucratic hierarchy they are more convinced of the Hindu leaders' infallibility

than even the most complaisant Hindu official in the same position. One evening, shortly after the military occupation of Goa, a high Hindu official who disapproved of it and was not afraid to say so even in a gathering of other officials, dragged me into a discussion with a high Indian Christian official. I said that the act was like Hitler's occupation of Austria. 'My God!' exclaimed the Christian, 'do you compare it to that?' I rather thought that the God whom he was invoking was more on the side of the two dissentient Hindus than on that of the assenting Christian. The Indian Christians differ from the Hindus in this that though the latter admit the power of their fellow-Hindu rulers and would do nothing to incur their displeasure, privately, they do not see much virtue in the leaders. The Christians, on the other hand, give the impression of believing sincerely that the Hindu ministers cannot be very different from the archangels, standing by the side of God.

In the light of their present attitudes and behaviour it is not at all difficult to forecast the future of the Indian Christians. The wealthy and well-placed among them will become merged in the Anglicized Hindu upper middle-class, with only a difference of faith, which nobody, including themselves, will take very seriously. On the other hand the majority of Indian Christians, that is, those who are poor and already depressed socially, will become something like inferior castes in Hindu society. It is not even improbable that they will perform Hindu and Christian rites impartially.

Already, there is among all classes of Indian Christians, especially those of good position, a greater readiness to take part in Hindu festivals like the Holi and the Diwali than is safe for them. The Christians sprinkle colour, smear red powder, and explode fireworks like the Hindus. This they justify on the plea that these are nothing but social customs. They do not know the fact to which I have just referred that the most insidious side of Hinduism is the social. A Hindu sets greater store by Hindu

social behaviour than by any Hindu belief or dogma, which, in any case, it would be very hard to define. Bishop Heber had seen this even in the early days of missionary activity in India. He found that many Hindu boys of a missionary school in Benares had begun to say the Lord's Prayer, and he observed: 'Their parents seem extremely indifferent to their conduct in this respect. Prayer, or outward adoration, is not essential to caste. A man may believe what he pleases, nay, I understand, he may almost say what he pleases, without danger of losing it, and so long as they are not baptized, neither eat nor drink in company with Christians or Pariahs, all is well in the opinion of the great majority, even in Benares.' So most Hindus are ready to compound the credo for the Holi and the Diwali.

Even in the worst days of Roman persecutions Christianity was not faced with such a prospect as that which faces it today in India. Hindu tolerance is not a thing which lends dignity to what it tolerates. Therefore, thinking of the past of that religion I wish for a persecuting Caesar in India, so that its followers might be challenged to save themselves. If there was in the Hindu political order today a modern Nero, instead of a modern Augustus crying, 'Varus, Varus, give me back my legions', it would have been possible for me to see a great vision.

The Christians would be hated for His name's sake. I should see the abomination of desolation standing where it ought not, children rising against parents, brother betraying brother, and even father the son, and the last of the faithful wearily taking the road out of Delhi, towards the south-west. As darkness falls and he is near the Idgah, prayer-ground, in which Tamerlain camped after sacking Delhi, he sees a figure coming up the road. When it comes nearer he recognizes it for what it is, and falling down on his knees, cries: *'Quo vadis, Domine!'*

The figure replies: *'Ad Novam Delhiam, redimere apostatas et traditores.'*

But no one will redeem the Christians of India, for there will be no traitors among them, and if there will be apostates they will all remain unconscious of the apostasy.*

NOTE ON CHAPTER 13

I have to explain that the omission of the two minority communities of the Parsis and Sikhs in this book is deliberate. The Parsis are foreign colonists settled in India, and except for a small number of de-natured members of the community they have remained foreigners in spirit. On the other hand, the Hindus do not regard them as fellow-Indians.

The Sikhs are a political community, the basis of whose politics is religion, as is the case with the Muslims also. I shall deal with the Sikhs in a future essay devoted to the political evolution of India.

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* As it happens, I can give two instances of the unconsciousness of the Indian Christians of the implications of their political and social hobnobbing with the Hindu ruling class. On January 17, 1963, there was a public meeting in Delhi in connexion with the centenary of the birth of Swami Vivekananda, one of the leaders of the Hindu revivalism of the late nineteenth century. Nehru spoke at this meeting, standing by the side of a garlanded portrait of Swami Vivekananda. An Indian Christian bishop sat by his side without minding the Hindu iconolatry, and in his speech declared that 'Vivekananda had blazed a new trail by championing the cause of universal brotherhood'.

After the death of Nehru the Anglican Church of India held a special memorial service for him at the cathedral Church of Redemption in New Delhi (June 6, 1964). The Metropolitan of India was present and delivered an address. In connexion with this service, I accuse the Anglican Church of India of three offences: (1) Performing a Christian service for a non-Christian political leader; (2) Of completely disregarding the wishes of the dead man in respect of religious ceremonies after his death (see p. 370 infra); (3) Of using a place of worship for political purposes and in the interest of a State which declares itself 'secular'.

In fact, the Anglican Church of India has inherited the worst feature of its parent—subservience to temporal power. But in Great Britain the State at least does not pretend to be secular, and regards itself as Christian.

Chapter 14

THE DOMINANT MINORITY

I COME now to the last element in the population of India which can be distinguished from the groups I have described, as a separate ethnic entity with its own collective psychology. It is constituted by the Hindus of the Anglicized upper middle-class, and is thus an offshoot or rather variety of the Hindu species. The class is a psychological and cultural breed, but it has not been hybridized by those ardent and successful improvers of equine, canine, or bovine races—the British. The Anglicized Hindu breed of India is self-hybridized, like white peas from an adjacent bed of reds.

Their number is small, and in relation to the rest of the population almost negligible. I doubt if they are even one-fortieth of that neglected minority, the Muslims, and they might well be just half-a-million. But there is no contesting the fact that they are the dominant minority. They are in the front rank in every field of human activity, political, economic, cultural, so far as anything can be called activity in present-day India.

For this reason I shall have to deal with the class in each one of my essays, and in this one I am concerned only with that aspect of their group personality which bears on the question how far this class can be depended on to maintain and complete the modernization of India, which really means its Westernization. In other words, I shall discuss the class only as the agents of that transformative process.

The makers of policies in the two great Western countries, the United States and Great Britain, look to these men, and even more to the women of this class, for the success of their policies. This small order is seen by them to be as well-fruiting in geniuses as an espalier of

apple trees. It is indeed the rising hope of the West in India.

The British revision of opinion in respect of the class is a psychological wonder hardly matched in the whole of human history. From the unqualified derision of the past the British people who have to deal with us have now come round to unqualified admiration. The other Western nations are following in the wake of the two leaders, and even the Soviet Union is not above flattering the class, though perhaps, being the only country in the world of today which is not hypnotized by its own opportunism, it does so only to entice the fat cattle to the Red Altar. The whole of the Western 'Aid India Club', in the most comprehensive sense, thinks that these Anglicized Hindus are the only people who matter in the country, and that they are going to reshape and remake Hindu society in the image of the Western. But that is precisely the question which I treat as open, and my description of the class in this book is offered as an explanation of this suspension of judgement—Oh no, in reality, of the quashing of the Western verdict.

From the point of view of Westernization, political, economic, or cultural, nine-tenths of the Hindu middle-class persons who have received education in English in schools or universities can be left out of the reckoning. Their Westernization is purely technical, and it is relevant only to their method of earning a livelihood or making a career, and it leaves their character and outlook untouched. These men in their Westernization conform to the minimum specifications of vocational Westernization laid down formerly by the British rulers and now continued by their Brown heirs.

It is only the well-to-do core and élite of this class which can be said to have been Westernized in any effective manner, and it is for this reason that I have estimated the numerical strength of the order at such a low figure. Even of this small class not all have been educated or trained in Western countries. In fact, formerly,

those who had received some sort of education or training in Europe or America were only a fraction of the whole body of Westernized Hindus. Nowadays, on the contrary, they certainly are in a majority. However, the women who have been abroad still form a minority of the Hindu women who have taken to Western ways, but their number, too, is growing.

There is some ill-feeling between the two wings of the Anglicized Hindus, that is to say, between those who have been abroad and those who have not been, and even more exclusive ill-feeling between those who have been at Oxford or Cambridge and those who have not been at these two universities, wherever else they might have been. The country-bred Anglicized persons consider those who have come back from the West as swell-headed, and the other side reciprocates by regarding the 'natives' as jackdaws in borrowed plumes. But in respect of fundamental attitudes and cultural complexion, there is no very great difference between the two sections. In fact, I do not meet more Hindus with a Westernized mind among those who have been educated in the West than I do among those who have remained in India. The stay in the West seems to be more obvious in the finish of the order than in its substance.

The regional distinctions between Anglicized Hindus are far more important. All of them can be recognized provincewise by the specific quality of Westernization; that is to say, the general body of the Anglicized Hindus falls into provincial types. Those from the Punjab tend to be different from those from Bengal or Madras, and even the Bengali and the Tamil Anglicism are not the same. But these differences, important as they are if one is considering the specific shade of the Westernization, are not significant if the transformation is considered simply as passing over to a way of life modelled on that of the West and recognizably alienated from the traditional Hindu way.

Even more important are the distinctions which have been created within the Anglicized upper middle-class by the social function or, in simple words, by the means of livelihood and vocations. From this functional standpoint, the Anglicized Hindus can be divided into four groups: I—The Officers of the Armed Forces; II—The Bureaucratic, Managerial, and Professional Elite; III—The Technicians; and IV—The Youth in Schools and Colleges. I shall describe the dominant minority in these categories, which are also the most convenient and apposite for appraising their role in Westernization.

Let me begin with the officer corps. They are a new order in Hindu society. They were the last to join the Anglicized upper middle-class, and did not exist before the first World War. But they are the most Anglicized Hindus today in their behaviour and manner of living. They are also the Hindus who know least about Hindu ways and traditions and are the most indifferent to all things Hindu so far as these can be present in the consciousness. This transformation and the attendant sterilization were brought about by a very special and strict system of education devised for them by the British military authorities in India, which is being continued by the present Hindu ruling class.

As it happens, I had something to say about this system of education and training when it was being laid down. To make my point of view clear I have to give the background. Though the question of giving commissions to Indians in the British Indian army was discussed as far back as the eighties of the last century, no Indian was actually given one till towards the end of the first World War. After that it was decided, as a matter of policy, to begin the Indianization of the leadership of the Indian Army by admitting Indians to the officer corps as a matter of regular practice. In accordance with this policy, at first a very small number of Indians of good education and social position were hand-picked and sent to Sandhurst, and so far as it was possible for Indians to become

typical Sandhurst products, they became that. This system was continued during the twenties. Then it was found necessary to reconsider the policy, in order to give the Indian officers military education in their own country.

So, when Field-Marshal Sir Philip Chetwode was Commander-in-Chief the decision to establish a military college in India was finally taken in principle. The only thing that remained to be done was to devise the ways and means to manufacture passable Sandhurst officers in the Indian environment. A committee called the Military College Committee was thus appointed in 1931 to lay down the system of education and training. Sir P. S. Sivaswamy Aiyar, a distinguished Indian who had held very high office in Madras and was an exponent of the Indian point of view in regard to military matters in the Legislative Assembly, was a member of this Committee. I was then taking a good deal of interest in military organization and history, and he and I were known to each other by correspondence. Thus it came about that I wrote letters to Sir Sivaswamy on the work before the Committee.

The correspondence began even before the sittings of the Committee. For instance, on April 30, 1931, I wrote:

It is particularly important to insist on a suitable kind of education. The officials here, both civilian and military, will do their best to confine recruiting to the most wealthy classes and convert the cadets into imitation, polo-playing English subalterns, weaned away from their habits and traditions, which will make them as ineffective or offensive as the majority of the Indian members of the civil service. What is more, the ideal of an imitation Englishman will never attract the best manhood of India.

I shall quote once more from the correspondence. On May 25 I wrote:

The Committee begins its sittings today. I am sure we shall be able to see how the land lies in a day or two,

The C.-in-C. assured the Council of State that the days before the Skeen Committee were gone and we were to see the beginning of a new day. I should like very much to know what sort of a new sun it is that we are going to witness the rise of.

The sun rose, and the same sun is now at the zenith. But it is a very moonish sun, palely reflecting the light from Sandhurst. The efforts of the Indian members of the Committee were of no avail. A completely exotic military college was set up, as indeed it could be expected to be.

One of the results of the grafting of this wholly alien system of training was continuous complaint that suitable candidates for the new military college were not forthcoming in sufficient numbers, even though the intake at first was only sixty cadets for the whole of British India. The selected ones felt so famished by eating English food in term-time that when they went home in the vacations they ate curries and sweets in great quantities and came back very much reduced by stomach ailments. My final view on this unsuitable system was embodied in a little book on the Indianization of the army I wrote in 1935 for the Indian National Congress. I shall quote the passage, and I hope its relevancy for the present discussion will be admitted.

At first I re-stated the argument which I had already put forward in my letter to Sir Sivaswamy:

The first condition of success of any system of military education is that it should be suited to the national character and not try to uproot the cadets from their social environment. This, however, is exactly what the military authorities are attempting in India. They are not only trying to inculcate the best moral qualities of British officers in their Indian replicas but are also imposing upon the latter the English mode of living and social behaviour. This is due to the fact that their notion of the best type of officer is derived from public school ideals, which set almost as much value on a code of good form limited to

pure externals as on the English traits of self-restraint, reticence, fair play, and strong will. But it is exactly this code of good form which seems trivial to the more serious Indian temperament, rather inclined to seek conscious idealistic satisfaction in every effort and activity. Therefore, whenever they try to adopt this code of good form they lose some of their robustness and become both self-conscious and finical.

Then I developed the implication of my point of view. I said:

The bearing of this fact on the supply of candidates to the military college, when taken together with the high cost of education at Dehra Dun and the complicated method of selection, should be clear to all. Though it might be possible to find in India a fair number of young men who approximate the British type in character and outlook, the number of those who satisfy this test and have in addition the requisite economic status, familiarity with spoken English and the English mode of living, and contacts in Government circles, must necessarily be very few. Hence, in practice, the standard set by the military authorities favours candidates of the class which possesses all the external qualifications.

I went on:

This is the urban, Anglicized, and well-to-do upper middle-class of India, which from its long association with the Government is most familiar with the technique of job securing, but which for this very reason is not likely to produce the best type of officer. There is no doubt that this class is in many respects the most intelligent, supple, and refined in India. Nevertheless, its long monopoly of State employment has made it value official careers more for their security, prestige, and handsome emoluments than opportunities for service, while its mode of living has not only somewhat de-vitalized it, but made it a stranger to the people. It must be the over-representation of candidates of this class which leads the military

authorities to complain about the absence of the natural leaders of the country among the candidates for commissions.

The really astounding fact is that there should not have been some re-thinking on the subject even after independence, and the old system should have been continued without substantial change. I am recording these anticipations of mine to show how easily men overlook the possibility of there being a vast difference between their intentions and the actual result of their actions even when it is not difficult to forecast it. All the prolonged efforts of the British military authorities in India to create an officer class with aptitudes, outlooks, and behaviour like their own have led only to failure. I have no occasion here to pronounce on the professional capacity of the Indian officers as fostered by the exotic system of education,* but appraising them as an instrument of Westernization I would say that the attempt at sterilizing the Hindu and transforming him into an Englishman has failed completely.

The gelding knife has been applied at the wrong place, and as agents of Westernization these men are effigies for show, who could not be more ineffectual if they were at Madame Tussaud's. Their Anglicism is artificial, one might say even counterfeit. There is no real strength in it, and certainly not a breath of any proselytizing spirit. Their whole way of life is a drilled habit, a matter of spit and polish. Perhaps the strongest emotion for anything Western that they feel for what they call 'Scotch'.†

* This passage, indeed the whole of this chapter, was written before October-November, 1962, when the military competence of the Indian commanders was put to the test.

† The officers of the Indian army have had 'indulgences' and 'dispensations' granted to them by the prohibitionist Hindu government in respect of alcohol, though the drinking of it is a major sin in Hindu sacred law, and the atonement for it is to commit suicide by drinking boiling spirits. I have read of a British soldier who died of drinking chilled beer when hot, our officers should die of drinking hot whisky when cool.

When I see these Knights Templars of Anglicism and take note of the admiration they evoke in the feminine wing of Hindu society, I am reminded of a story of Tagore's. In it he shows a Muslim princess in love with a Brahmin soldier, who is in command of her father's troops. Of course, she had neither met nor talked to him, only loved him at sight. In the Mutiny the sepoys of the Nawab revolt under their commander, but the Nawab remains loyal to the British and secretly informs them. The Red Coats (Tagore makes them Red Coats, though during the Sepoy war the British soldiers fought in Khaki—dust-coloured uniform; the last fighting in Red being during the Sikh wars) march in and destroy the little contingent. Going out at night for her beloved, the princess finds him under a heap of the dead, still breathing but badly wounded. She gives him water and restores him to sense. Opening his eyes, he asks, 'Who are you, the angel who has come to save me?' She bows down and says that she is his handmaiden—the Nawab's daughter. At this the man springs up like a wounded tiger and slaps her in the face, crying out, 'Daughter of an infidel, traitor, and man of dishonour! at this hour of death you have come to destroy my caste by giving me water with your Mlechchha hands?' She falls down stunned by the blow, which was the only requital for her love she ever gets in her life. The soldier drags himself to a boat, and floats away.

But the princess vows that for her this will not be the last word. She resolves to adopt the Hindu way of life, reach the highest stage by learning from Hindu saints, and become deserving of her beloved. When she thinks she is Hindu enough, she goes out in search of him, and spends almost a life in this quest. At last she finds him —but in a Lepcha village near Darjeeling: living in a Lepcha hut, with a Lepcha wife and his half-Lepcha children and grandchildren; sees him gathering maize from the yard. The reproach that arose in her mind but remained unuttered to him, for that would have been futile,

was this—'Brahmin! You have exchanged one set of habits for another, where shall I get back the youth and life I have lost for you?'

Fascinated by the air and prestige of our military officers, an immense number of Hindu girls from traditional and even Bania homes are rushing to convent schools, cutting off their hair, taking to lipstick, speaking English with the outrageous Eurasian accent, and Anglicizing themselves *à outrance*. But when as a class they will have completed their Feringhizing of themselves, they will probably find the officers re-Hinduized under pressure from the Khadi-clad politicians. Then they will cry out in tears, 'Brown Sahib, you have exchanged one look for another, but where shall I get back the sweet Hindu air I have sacrificed for you?'*

The Westernization of the second group of Anglicized Hindus, that is to say, the bureaucrats, managers, and professionals, is less complete and less obvious externally, but it has gone deeper in comparison. This is due to the fact that in most of them Western ways are at least three generations old, and in some they are even in the fourth generation. All of them have read some Western literature, philosophy, political science, or history and this reading has not been for all of them only a vocational course. Something has gone out of it into their mind, though, of course, the permeation varies greatly from family to family or individual to individual.

But the weakness of the Westernization of this class of men lies in the very length and protraction of the assimi-

* A high military officer who was in the habit of sending greeting cards at Christmas and New Year, added this year the words 'Ram Ram!' to the familiar printed formula. 'Ram Ram!' is, of course, the greeting of the Bania or commercial class in Hindu society. The Anglicized officer did not perhaps know what its associations were, but an Englishman who visited India between 1583 and 1591 did. He was Ralph Fitch, and he wrote: 'They be a kind of craftie people, worse then the Jewes. When they salute one another, they heave up their hands to their heads, and say Rame, Rame.'

lation. Their reaction to Western influences has now become a routine affair, and the influences themselves have ceased to be stimulating. On the other hand, with each succeeding generation, the men themselves are becoming more and more enfeebled and less and less absorbent. It would seem that their saturation point was reached long ago. So they are now something like leached soil for the growth of continuous Western crops, and in strength of character, varying the metaphor, one might describe them as wine which is very much *madérisé*.

Those foreigners who are only seeing them today in their day of worldly power and prestige will have great difficulty in believing this. To all appearance, their Anglicism is not only assertive, but even insolent. They do not behave politely to any Indian who does not belong to their class. They are strident in their contempt for Hinduism and Hindu ways, and voluble in repeating any Western credo, however trite. In every respect they appear to be a self-confident caste, and it is natural to assume that the self-assurance springs from a sense of inner strength and a living faith in new values.

Indeed, there are perhaps few people on our pullulating Mother Earth of today who hold a higher opinion of themselves, of their own intelligence, knowledge, and culture. When these Hindus cannot treat a particular individual rudely for any reason, but find him holding opinions opposed to theirs, they sport an oily smile which is more maddening than any outright discourtesy could be. They are pontifical and unshakable in their assumption of omniscience.

I shall give only one example of this. Some years ago Dr Radhakrishnan, speaking on international fellowship and amity in his *Aufklärung* manner, quoted St Paul in support of his argument. He cited verse 26 of Chapter 17 of the Acts of the Apostles in the A.V., which runs as follows: 'And God hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth . . .', obviously taking the passage to mean that God had made all the different nations really bloodkins and intended

them to live as such on earth. On the strength of this interpretation he found in this scriptural passage a Christian proclamation of the brotherhood of man, as a creation of God himself.

The next day the speech cropped up in a conversation I had with a high Indian official. I observed that Dr Radhakrishnan had put a construction on the passage which it did not bear. St Paul simply meant to say that God had created the various nations of men *out of* one ancestor or substance (Adam or dust), and wished them to worship Him. Thus, in actual fact, what was uppermost in St Paul's mind was the diversity of mankind rather than its unity, except in worshipping one God.

I went on to say that the word 'blood' in the A.V., which was probably responsible for the misunderstanding and which in Greek was *haimatos*, did not occur in the great Uncials, especially the Codex Vaticanus, and was to be found only in the Textus Receptus, the Codex Bezae, the group of Syriac MSS known as HLPS, and in the Peshitto version. In Latin it was found only in the old Latin translation in the Codex Bezae, as in *Fecit ex uno sanguine omnem nationem*, and did not occur even in the Vulgate, which only had *Fecitique ex uno omne genus hominum*. Therefore modern English translations omitted 'blood', and they also substituted 'from' or 'out of' for 'of', which was ambiguous, inasmuch as it could indicate the origin, source, and the like of anything, as well as its material, substance, or component elements.*

So I rattled on, but by the time I was nearing the end of the argument I had lost all interest in it, and only noted

* It must not be imagined from this that I lay claim to biblical scholarship. From my young days I was fascinated by the Acts of the Apostles, and at that time was reading it again in the monumental edition of Foakes Jackson and Kirsopp Lake. Being also interested in textual criticism I naturally paid attention to the apparatus criticus. Full of the newly found knowledge, I spilled it out at every opportunity, and Dr Radhakrishnan presented a tempting flank, too tempting indeed for my cavalry not to make a dash at it.

that the man was saying, 'I know, I know', at every pause. These dignitaries assess knowledge and even intelligence by relative official rank and salary, and quite sincerely assume that a man who is drawing two thousand rupees a month must be twice as learned as a man who has only one thousand. They also cannot understand that a man in a lower position in the bureaucratic hierarchy might actually be so irreverent as to pull their leg. I have yet to meet a man of this class who does not say 'I know, I know', to any information that might be given to him. I also know that among themselves afterwards they amuse themselves by saying how they have fooled the pedant and bookworm.

In their personal behaviour they show themselves to be even more class-conscious. I shall illustrate this, too, with a personal anecdote. On March 1, 1962, the London Philharmonic Orchestra, conducted by Sir Malcolm Sargent, gave a concert in New Delhi, and my wife and I went to it. Normally, I do not go to these concerts, because they are more social functions than musical events and also because it is very difficult to get tickets. When the Prime Minister of India attends them another unpleasantness is added—ill-dressed security men, standing everywhere, obviously carrying revolvers. But on that occasion my friends of the British Council had provided tickets for us.

We were shown to our seats by one of the young ladies who act as ushers. They are always from the smartest set in Delhi. I found that my wife and I had to be on two sides of an 'aisle'. I did not like it, but I had, of course, to accept the arrangement. However, as soon as I was going to sit down in my chair, a lady of the Anglicized type who was in the next one objected, saying that the seat (my seat) was hers. My ticket was produced and was found to bear the same number as the chair, and so I was placed in it by the girl. The lady would not accept it, and went on arguing vociferously that when she had bought her ticket her number was on the aisle. Then

the supervising usher explained to her that after the plan had been made there was some rearrangement of the seats to make room for more people, and that she was very sorry. Even so the lady refused to accept the position and asked the girls to take my chair over to the other side. They very politely declared their inability, and I remained seated.

Then she opened the attack on me. She said, 'Why don't you go over to your wife?' I replied that I could not do that. Then she snapped out petulantly, 'At least move away your chair from mine.' I was not as near as six inches to her right side, and I said to myself, 'Capital! This is like old times, the days of British imperialism I so admire, when the Mem Sahib walking along the pavements of Chowringhee could not tolerate our proximity, and the Sahib with her—you could never be sure whether it was the husband, suitor, brother, or paramour—shoved us away.' But I did move away the chair.

Even this did not satisfy the lady. She went to the man in charge of the hall, and got me removed to the other side. I was glad to be with my wife, but certainly I did not relish my first defeat at the hands of an Anglicized Hindu, who made the humiliation worse by seeming to be a fellow-Bengali. In one of my earliest writings, published as far back as January, 1926, I had observed with reference to the sorry state of Indo-British personal relations:

When after reading Bergson or Benedetto Croce, Mr Hardy or Mr Wells with a sense of intellectual kinship, an Indian comes across some instance of ignorant superciliousness in a European—be it in the shape of a remark in a book or a personal affront at the hands of a police-sergeant or a tactless European merchant on the Maidan—he returns home in bitterness and wrath, and his previous enjoyment of a European writer becomes to him a cankering reminiscence of his humiliation.

Never in my life in British days had any such incident happened to me. I had written that from hearsay. But that evening I was made to feel the truth of my one-time observation. Only the day before I had met Sir Malcolm Sargent, and discussed the programme with such assurance that an English lady who was near whispered to my wife, 'What a bold man he is!' But after being put in my place by the (i) Anglicized, (ii) Bengali, (iii) Hindu lady, I could hardly bear to recall that conversation: it became a cankering reminiscence of my humiliation at the hands of one of the Epigoni.

It is the resolute measures I take in advance to prevent the development of such situations in any shape that have given me the reputation of being a very quarrelsome man among the people of the Anglicized class. But one might well ask that if these men and women can behave like this to me, what might they not do to those who are more diffident and cannot, like me, protect themselves?

It must not be assumed that I am making undue capital out of an isolated act of rudeness which might take place in the most polished society. That is not so. The behaviour was typical. With exceptions which only prove the rule, it is a general experience to find all Anglicized Hindus behaving thus towards persons whom they do not look upon as equals. If girls of this class are even shop-girls, and in some of the stores run by the Government they are employed as such for the benefit of foreigners, they give airs as if they were conferring favours by selling their goods to ordinary Indian customers. If they are receptionists they practise quizzing on visitors who in their eye are not of the received standard.

I shall give another example of the rudeness, which also is from my experience. At a party one day, without any previous notice or any willingness or curiosity on my part, I was suddenly introduced by a German lady to one of the shining lights of the Anglicized order, who had just arrived. I had not seen him before, though, of course, I was familiar with his name. I definitely knew that he

also knew mine. Nevertheless, so far from saying even 'How do you do?'—not to speak of shaking hands—he did not even look at me, but passed on. Now, it might be supposed that since I was *persona non grata* with these men, I was being deliberately insulted. But no. When another Indian, who was a young author and whose book had just then been very favourably reviewed in the British Press, was introduced in a like manner, he got exactly the same treatment. Discourtesy to those who cannot brow-correspondence as well as conversation. All these men and women. Even foreign diplomats complain of the rudeness of the officials and other high-placed Indians in correspondence as well as conversation. All these men combine the Hindu pride of *caste* with the English pride of *class*, and they *can be* very unpleasant.*

If that be so, you will ask—where is the weakness? Such arrogance, offensive as it is, can hardly exist without some awareness of a superior culture, combined with an assertive devotion to it. That precisely is what is not there, and the worst part of this egregious snobbery is that it is unaccompanied by the substance which could be assumed to have inspired it. It has no ideological or cultural foundation, and is wholly a matter of worldly position and power, which they think are unassailable and will therefore remain permanent. They are incapable of realizing that their present status is dependent on a temporary and very exceptional personal factor. To make no mystery of it, the dominant position of the Anglicized Hindu upper middle-class is due to the presence of Nehru, first as the Prime Minister of India, next as the supreme national leader, and, over and above all, as the object of the Hindu personality cult which has even now made a divinity of him, to be worshipped in a temple, like the Roman emperors.

Personally, that is, in his ideas and character, Nehru is the leader of the Anglicized upper middle-class of India, but it is not this which has made him the absolute

* See Appendix I to this chapter.

dictator that he is politically, *malgré lui*. He holds that position and gets his power from a wholly dissimilar source, a source which he dislikes and disapproves of, which yet has made him what he is politically. It is the personality cult in the religion of the Hindus, which was transferred to the political sphere with the advent of Mahatma Gandhi. It was that typical prophet of the Hindu masses who built up this kind of leadership for Nehru, and transmitted the quasi-religious primacy to him in apostolic succession by what was equivalent to a laying on of hands. But since in fact Nehru does exercise the esoteric leadership, he can and has put its power and sanction behind his own social order. However alien the personalities and ideas of this order might be to the Hindu masses, the masses will give their support to it through the nexus that Nehru is, and so long as he lives and maintains the nexus, the Anglicized Hindu order will also remain in the saddle. But as soon as he goes it will quite naturally be overthrown. That is what the class as a whole cannot realize—hence the blind and confident arrogance.

One might, however, admit the possibility of their being ousted from political and administrative power without accepting as a corollary that their Westernizing cultural role will also come to an end. A cultural function has no necessary relationship with political and administrative power, and therefore the loss of the one need not always bring in its wake a loss of the other. As a Bengali, one instance of the independence of the two comes readily to my mind. The Bengalis, who in the nineteenth century took the lead in accepting Western ideas and brought about a genuine transformation of their mind as well as a partial transformation of their society, had no political power behind them. On the contrary, British political power was against them, against their ideas, and against their activities. Yet in the sphere of culture and of social life it was the politically powerless Bengalis who won. This was due to the faith they had in their

new ideas, and the energy and courage they showed in propagating them.

These, however, are precisely the things which can no longer be expected from the Anglicized Hindus of India. To whatever province they might belong, they are marked by a common lack of faith, energy, and courage. The whole order seems to be in a state of premature debility. It contains no men capable of putting passion in the pursuit of Western ideals and fighting for them against opposition and obloquy, as the Westernizing Hindus did in the nineteenth century. The class, which now forms the executive element in the ruling order, is sunk in an easy-going and affluent materialism. The Westernization supported by these caryatids is only a façade. Behind it lies hidden a dangerous void of faith, ideas, courage, and, of course, energy.

This is rubbing it in, though. Almost all Anglicized Hindus admit that the Westernization which impinged on the higher regions of their mind is now at the point of exhaustion, and what survives of it is even more dilute than the proverbial milk and water. The only influence and prestige which makes it still possible for those who retain this out-of-date Westernization to earn a second-rate livelihood in contemporary India is due to the presence either at the prow or the helm of the Indian ship of State of men like Dr Radhakrishnan and Mr Nehru. The number of writers who seek and obtain forewords to their books from these two author-statesmen is surprisingly large, but it is intelligible—it is through these chits that the intellectuals of India can get jobs from un- or anti-intellectual Hindu politicians of the normal type, or at least directions to libraries, colleges, and other public institutions to buy a substantial number of their works.

What is most significant and deplorable from the point of view of the continuation of the Westernizing process in India is the timidity of the Anglicized upper middle-class. If there is willingness and determination to introduce Western ways the knowledge may follow, but there

is hardly any incentive to know because the desire itself is so sheepish and apologetic. The whole Anglicized order is mortally afraid of Hindu prejudices. They give up things they cherished at the hint of slightest trouble. I do not think that the men of the Anglicized class loved anything more devotedly than their English clothes, especially the tie. But one day a hint came from very exalted quarters that these were taking the class away from the people, and they threw their Western wardrobe overboard overnight, and went into a costume which was formerly the livery of their servants. Men in general, I have always thought, are very conservative in their external habits. But the Anglicized Hindus are very revolutionary, though in the reverse-gear.

At the slightest clamour from some Hindu bigot or ignoramus, they proscribe books on India written by honest writers, and among the proscribed works is a book by Arthur Koestler. When the Catholic Church puts a book on the Index or when the Communists ban a book, each party can be said to be acting in the interest of ideas which it holds. The Anglicized Hindus always act in the interest of ideas they themselves condemn. There is no principle behind their behaviour, which is conditioned only by absolute timidity. The same people who ban Koestler, yield, when in London or Paris, to their womenfolk and do not mind their shopping in Bond Street or Rue du Faubourg Saint Honorè, or having their hair done at Raymond's or Desfossé's. The reaction has nothing to do with any moral or cultural issue, it is entirely controlled, as in animals, by a sense of relative strength. But this also makes the behaviour amoral, and absolves the class from all ethical responsibility for abandoning Western culture.

Many instances could be given of their timidity in the face of Hindu or nationalistic prejudices, and I shall single out one which illustrates the weakness of the order in respect of a thing which is essential for Westernization. It is the use of the English language in India. There are

few Anglicized Indians who can express their mind in any language except English, and who would have been what they are without their knowledge of English. Yet not one of these men, when in an official position, dare say a word in favour of English except as a medium of technical instruction.

Astonishing as it might seem, this particular timidity is shown by Jawaharlal Nehru himself, who would not only cease to be vocal if he could not express himself in English, but would not be Nehru without that language. In saying this I do not have in mind his friendship with the Mountbattens, though that too needs a good deal of English, but his personality in itself—in his deepest solitudes where probably he is at his greatest in spite of being a demogogic political leader. I cannot assume that he does not know that English is not a mere instrument for us but a force shaping and moulding personality, making us a wholly different kind of character from what we should have been if we did not know the language. I am able to compare every day the personality of a man who does not know English, or for that matter does not know it well, with that of those who do. In short, I am quite sure that Jawaharlal Nehru knows as well as I do that our moral and cultural personality depends on English. Yet when it comes to defending the English language against the fanaticism of the Hindu bigots and nationalists, he never goes beyond the technological plea. He stresses its need only as a medium of scientific (in the very narrow sense) and technological training.

I shall quote from a speech which is his latest utterance on the subject at the time of writing. When on October 5, 1962, he trounced those who wanted to do away with English I thought that at last he was going to hit out. He did nothing of the kind. As reported by the newspapers, he only said, 'It was in India's own interest that English should be learnt, because it opened the door to scientific and technological advancement.' Speaking to an audience composed of Indian university students and

teachers, he gave them the example of the U.A.R., which, he added, had made a knowledge of English, French, or German compulsory.

We are forgetting the Prophets. I cried out to myself in dismay. 'Lo, thou trustest in the staff of the broken reed, in Egypt . . . Woe to them that go down to Egypt for help!' But even for such a defence of the English language a Hindu nationalist leader criticized him. Now, if even Nehru is showing this timidity, all the other Anglicized Hindus might well lie low.

This timidity about the English language and all things Western gains more significance if it is considered along with the outstanding trait of the Anglicized Hindu's character—which is weakness. This weakness has deprived the class as a whole of moral courage and fighting spirit. Almost all their evil propensities spring from weakness, and not from any inherent viciousness. It is only after seeing them that I have realized the full truth of La Rochefoucauld's saying that *'la faiblesse est le seul défaut que l'on ne saurait corriger'*. They play for small stakes in a small way, and remain satisfied with their small gains. The result is that their whole existence is utterly trivial, and this triviality has become a permanent quality of their personality. Perhaps the best proof of this is that they do not participate in the Hindu sorrow, do not feel the weight of the secular curse on the head of that unfortunate people.

There is not much to be expected from the third group of Anglicized Hindus, and therefore there is not also much to be said. The technicians are not, and will never be, effectual agents, or any kind of agents, of Westernization—not even in the technical field. Otherwise, there would not have been seen in this country such a large number of foreign technicians. Most of the Indian technicians are concerned only with doing, and doing at a mechanical level, and they do not care about *being* or *becoming* anything.

Nowadays the majority of Hindu technicians are trained abroad, and some Indians are going there even as factory labour. Therefore it can be said that there are among this class of persons more individuals who have visited and seen the West than among any other group of Indians. I do not think that I shall be going seriously wrong if I say that in the dominant minority of India the technicians who have seen the West far outnumber the civil servants, lawyers and doctors, teachers and professors, or the military officers who have done so. Nevertheless all these technicians can be left almost wholly out of account in assessing the strength of the moral or intellectual force behind the Westernization of India. As a rule, after a sojourn in Europe and America, sometimes lasting many years, they come back almost without any Western outlook in them. What is even more surprising is the fact that this Western sojourn appears to atrophy whatever mental life they were capable of before going abroad. Thus after their return they are put to use somewhat like living spanners by the real agents of the Westernization of India.

There is a whole series of cumulative reasons behind this ineffectiveness. The first of these is the kind of scientific education they get in India in the schools and universities. These institutions teach science in a wholly mechanical fashion, and develop a handicraftsman's attitude to it. The general run of Hindus treat scientific education merely as the acquisition of a skill, a sort of necromancy without the supernatural, and never as a discipline for the mind or as a philosophy of life. Therefore in the Hindu student of science the general mental life and the learning of science run in separate channels. This nullifies the undoubted fact that for many decades the brightest young men in India have been going in for science.

Secondly, the technicians who go abroad enter technical colleges in India early in life, before their minds have been formed, and they soon get entangled in the mechanics of their profession. They do not try to improve

their knowledge of science as science, and hardly ever go deep into the theoretical principles of the techniques. This purely pragmatic attitude towards technical education is never outlived, and they find the techniques themselves so elaborate and complex that in trying to master them they get culturally sterilized. I have met men who have received their technical education from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, which certainly is not a mere technical institution, but I would not call them scientists of any kind, in some cases not even educated men. Moreover, many Indian technicians nowadays receive training only in factories.

Thirdly, the social life they have in the West has even a positively harmful effect on them. Most Indian students who go abroad for technical training come from middle-class families with very moderate means, which scrape a little money with great difficulty to send a son abroad to give him a chance in life. So the young men, even when they have the desire, can never afford to live with people who would have been their equals socially. This deprives them of opportunities to acquire new ideas and habits, and they tend to get completely stuck in the idea that Westernization is nothing more than urban industrial work, combined with mass-made popular amusements.

Yet perhaps the Indian technicians would not have been quite the foremen they often show themselves to be, in spite of their short stay and purely vocational education in the West, if they had gone there with some previous cultural preparation and experience of Western ways. But these young men come mostly from the more traditional Hindu families, and not from the Anglicized class in which certain Western habits and modes of thinking are partly acclimatized. Their parents are normal and traditional Hindus whose Westernization has gone no further than getting an education in English for the sake of making a living.

There remains to consider only the role of the Hindu youth in the Westernizing revolution, which is the process

really meant when people talk about the 'development' of 'under-developed' countries. I confess that I can give only a very half-hearted kick-off to this ball, because there is no provocation to get warm over the idea that young people in India are set on a revolution. Of course, when Westerners see so many young men in Teddy Boy clothes, count the girls in jeans, observe the make-up—male and female, not the back-brushed or shingled hair, hear the Eurasian drawl of their English, they feel convinced that if everybody else was to fail the West these bright young things would not. This faith even brings about a catharsis of Teddy Boy clothing and of jeans to these Westerners, so that they discover cultural values in these articles of wear which they never saw in them in their own countries, where the costumes had originated.

I cannot, however, share this faith. For one thing, I do not take youthful rebelliousness very seriously. It is a universal phenomenon, and has no revolutionary significance. The antithesis which it creates is a counterpart of that which exists within the same genetic process between heredity in the strict sense and variation. In normal societies the rebellion of youth stands for nothing more radical than a spring-cleaning of the parental home, so that in settling down in it the young people might have the cheerful conviction that they have made a new one. Besides, as Plato said long ago, to treat young people with greater respect than they deserve is a concomitant of democracy, and we live in a very democratic age.

But there are also reasons exclusive to contemporary Hindu society which makes the apparent rebelliousness of its youth and their desire to become Westernized a mere temporary effervescence. So far as Westernization is acquisition of Western vulgarity and viciousness, it must never be forgotten that Hindu society has always connived at and even encouraged foreign ways. It likes its youth to sow their wild oats in the hated foreigner's fields. On the other hand, it has also on the whole kept its balance of mind even when some Hindus have shown a pre-

ference for the good features of foreign cultures, having confidence in its own strength. This strength is a thing of which outsiders have no proper idea.*

When foreign residents or visitors hear my sceptical views about the expected Westernization of India they ask me, 'What about the students at the universities? They do not seem to care about Hinduism.' I ask them in my turn, 'Over what period of time have you watched them? Six months, one year, two years, five years? I was one of them in my time, I have watched them all my life, and in my existence of sixty-five years I have seen at least five shoals of Hindu tadpoles shedding their Western tails and becoming Hindu frogs. Of the scores of revolutionaries I knew in my young days, only *one* of a sort survives, and that is myself. All the rest have become good Hindus. Young men who would swear by no other name in 1927 but that of Lenin began to mutter that of Ramakrishna by 1937.

The best thing that can be said of the Westernizing impulse of the Hindu youth is that while it lasts it is spontaneous and that in many it has even an idealistic emotional fervour. Another interesting point about these young people is that their enthusiasm for things Western is not the product of education or stay abroad. At this stage of their life none of them virtually goes out of the country. Thus their Westernizing impulses and ideas are independent of direct Western schooling or inculcation. But whatever their early ardour, it does not last. The irresistible reclaiming power of Hindu society kills it, and by the time the young people are thirty they can hardly be recognized as their old selves.

Jane Austen wrote about one of her heroines:

Marianne Dashwood was born to an extraordinary fate. She was born to discover the falsehood of her own opinions, and to counteract, by her conduct, her most favourite maxims. She was born to overcome an affection formed so late in life as at seventeen, and with no sentiment supe-

* See Appendix 2 to this chapter.

rior to strong esteem and lively friendship, voluntarily to give her hand to another!—and *that* other, a man who had suffered no less than herself under the event of a former attachment, whom, two years before, she had considered too old to be married,—and who still sought the constitutional safeguard of a flannel waistcoat!

With a little paraphrasing, the passage might be made applicable to the best of the young Hindu revolutionaries. But in their case what is seen is not a victory of sense over sensibility, but the victory of tradition over revolution. I have always heard them crying, *'L'Ancien Régime est mort!'*—but, thinking better of it, crying out again, *'Vive l'Ancien Régime!'*

This relapse is like the whirling down of straw in a waterfall. The power of reclamation is so impressive by reason of its scale that one may compare its rush to the passage of our great rivers from their trans-Himalayan sources to the plains of India. One of the most remarkable things about the greatest rivers of the Gangetic plain is that they do not rise on the southern slopes of the Himalayas, but in the ranges or plateaux beyond, and cut their way through the high range, almost always close to a great peak. The Indus breaks out near Nanga Parbat, the headwaters of the Ganges rush past a whole cluster of peaks, the Gandak makes its way out near Dhaulagiri, the Kosi near Kinchinjunga, and so on. But perhaps this passage is seen at its most striking in the case of the Brahmaputra. After flowing as Tsangpo along the southern edge of the Tibetan plateau at an elevation of twelve thousand feet for many hundreds of miles, it turns round, cuts through the Himalayas, and enters the Indian plain at the eastern end of Assam at a height of hardly five hundred feet, and becomes the Brahmaputra.

This descent is so great that at one time, before the course of the river was traced through the impassable mountain country, it was believed that the Brahmaputra had its falls like the Nile or the Zambezi. But when in the twenties of this century Kingdom Ward for the first

time followed the course of the river by coming down from Tibet to Assam, he did not find any falls, but only a steady cutting through in deep gorges. Night after night he heard the roar of the Brahmaputra in the ravines, and it flowed fastest and roared loudest between the twin peaks of Namcha Barwa and Gyala Peri.

Those who have any knowledge of the cultural contrasts, of the cultural chiaroscuro one might say, within the Government of India, also know that the river of Hinduism roars loudest between those twin peaks of Anglicism in modern India—Mr Nehru and Mr Krishna Menon.* What are the wispy young people in that current? We Hindus have a legend that when the Ganges was descending from the head of Siva, Airavata, the elephant of heaven and of Indra, presumptuously tried to check its flow and was washed away. The young Hindus ranting against their traditions are not elephants of Westernization, they are the grass of the Hindu fields, which today is and tomorrow is cast into the oven. They talk in their little day, to be borne down into the everlasting silences of Hinduism; and after that they remain in a chasm which inspires any European who retains his Western sensibility with a superstitious awe:

> A savage place! as holy and enchanted
> As e'er beneath a waning moon was haunted
> By woman wailing for her demon-lover!

So, I should really have described and labelled the Anglicized Hindus of India in all their categories as a 'recessive' and not a 'dominant' minority. And recessive they will become soon enough, even as soon as the man, who has given them their present position but who is also seventy-three, will have disappeared from the scene.

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* Of course, this was written before Mr Menon was dropped from the Indian Cabinet after the debacle on the north-eastern frontier in November, 1962.

Appendix I

ANGLICIZED HINDU MANNERS

IN spite of what I have said in the text it has been pointed out to me that the reader might not be convinced that the bad manners of the Anglicized ruling order in India have any special importance or exceptional character. Therefore I make three additional points:

I. The Government of India has itself realized that the discourtesy showed by their high officials has become so widespread and harmful that special measures have to be taken to counteract it.

On April 22, 1964, the Minister of State for Home Affairs, India, informed the Indian parliament that the Union Government was likely to include a course in 'showing courtesy to the public' in the syllabus for Indian Administrative Service trainees. The rest of the report ran as follows:

Mr J. L. Hathi, Minister of State for Home Affairs, told Lok Sabha members (M.P.s) who complained of the 'misbehaviour' by officials that this was being done so that the conduct of I.A.S. officers could be 'shaped' from an early stage.

Mr Hathi told Mr H. C. Mathur that the Government of India recently asked the States to report instances of discourtesy by officials. The replies so far received showed that seven officers had been reprimanded and charges against five others were being investigated.

The Central Government had also sent a circular to the State Governments to impress on their officials the need to show courtesy and respect to the public, especially to the members of parliament and of the Legislative Assemblies.

(The I.A.S., it should be explained, is the highest cadre of the civil service in India, equivalent to the old I.C.S.)

II. The discourtesy is of the type exhibited by the British rulers of India to the inhabitants of the country. The worst caddishness on their part was their ill-treatment of Indians who got into their carriages in a railway train. Even this has been taken over by their Brown heirs. I read the following letter in my newspaper:

'Sir,—Public opinion in India about higher government officials has generally, not without reason, been low. Recently, while travelling by train from Calcutta to Siliguri I got into a first-class compartment in which were travelling a member of the I.C.S. and a high-ranking military officer. They immediately took objection to my presence and called the railway guard. What they obviously failed to see was that I was as much entitled to sitting accommodation in any first-class compartment as they were to their berths after 9 p.m.

'But what was worse, they kept on an acrimonious discussion even after the train was in motion, and exactly at 9 p.m. I had to leave and find a place in a third-class compartment as all that was then available. An American gentleman on the train was surprised at this snobbish behaviour and remarked that he had never seen such selfishness in America.—Yours, etc., TIMIR BARAN GUPTA (Belgachi, Darjeeling, June 21, 1963).

III. The grossest discourtesy is shown precisely by those with whom politeness should be a duty, namely, the holders of the highest official positions. I give two instances:

1. The governor of an Indian province callel the attending aide-de-camp a 'nitwit' in public at an academic function and sent him back to the government house, for a mistake which had caused no inconvenience.

2. One higher than a governor rated a governor like a schoolboy at an airport in the hearing of a large public

for having just consulted his comfort by not waking him up to say good-bye to a foreign dignitary.

One contrasts this kind of behaviour with that of Louis XIV, one of the greatest of despots. His self-restraint and good temper were exemplary. Even Saint-Simon, his most rancorous critic, saw him lose his temper only thrice in many years. Our great men lose it at least three times a day. It is only because he does not do so that Mr Lal Bahadur Sastri, Nehru's successor, is regarded by his humble countrymen as an exceptionally good man.

Appendix II

COERCIVE POWER OF HINDU TRADITIONS

I WISH to give some corroboration in fact to what I have said about the power of Hindu traditions by furnishing some particulars of how Jawaharlal Nehru himself was reclaimed by Hinduism just before and after his death. Though born a Hindu, he was positively unsympathetic to these traditions, especially when they had a religious complexion. None the less, throughout his political career he was held at bay by them, and in the last phase it was only the question of the *coup de grâce* and the scalp.

In January, 1964, he had a stroke, and at once Hindu homoeopathic magic rushed in to his aid. On January 22, a Hindu fire-sacrifice was performed for him at Allahabad, and it was attended by the Governor of the province.

Later, a Bombay weekly specializing in sensationalism reported that a Tantric magical rite to bring about his death had been performed in the Kali temple at Vindhyachal in U.P., and the paper connected a Deputy Minister of the Government of India with the rite, and it was given out afterwards that this minister was Mrs Tarakeswari Sinha. The matter was raised in the Legislative Assembly of U.P. on March 16, and the Speaker observed that if the report was true it was a very serious affair. The next day, the Chief Minister of U.P., Mrs Sucheta Kripalani, informed the House that the report was wholly baseless. A private member gave the additional information that the District Magistrate had told him that what had been performed was a rite for Nehru's recovery and not his death.

On the same day, March 17, in Delhi, the Congress Parliamentary Party discussed the matter in the presence of Nehru himself. He expressed his annoyance and said

that no sensible person would believe in such an impossible thing. He added that Mrs Sinha had seen him and explained that she had gone to the temple to have a Hindu rite performed for her son, and not to bring about his death.

Other magical rites for Nehru's welfare had, however, by this time begun. At the instance of his circle, three Hindu rites of homoeopathic magic had been performed for him before 1964. But on those occasions, when the priests had gone to ask for his authorization—for no Hindu rite can be performed unless the *yajamana*, the person for whom a rite is being performed, let us call him 'sacrificee', gives the 'power of attorney' to the priest—Nehru stormed at them and refused to consent. So the rites had to be performed under the generalized formula, 'for a person with name and sept as understood', incognito, so to speak, but when for the latest rite in January, 1964, three priests went to him, Nehru, from weariness perhaps, remained passive, and that was regarded as consent, and this rite was performed in his name.

It was the Tantric rite of repeating the *Maha-mrityunjaya mantra* (the great death-conquering spell) 425,000 times to the accompaniment of fire-sacrifices. It took place in the Kali temple at Kalkaji near Delhi, began on January 26, and ended on April 2. Twenty-five priests, all sworn to secrecy, performed it and received Rs. 7.50 per person, per day, as remuneration. The operative and essential part of the spell was Tantric, and as such in monosyllables, namely, *'om, haum, om, jum, sah,'*—all meaningless, of course.

The occult in the backshop of the Government of India is a terrifying spectre. A legion of astrologers and charlatans are making a comfortable living as consultants of the ministers, officials, and politicians. I also hear of homoeopathic magic for or against certain political cliques or politicians, for example, of the repetition of the *Bagalamukhi mantra*, a spell for the general discomfiture of all

enemies, known and unknown, at various places in Delhi in the interest of this or that minister.

To come now to Nehru's funeral. He had specifically set down in his will that 'I do not want any religious ceremonies performed for me after my death. I do not believe in any such ceremonies and to submit to them, even as a matter of form, would be hypocrisy and an attempt to delude ourselves and others.'

In spite of this categorical prohibition, Hindu religious ceremonies accompanied his cremation, and for most of the time both Mr Lal Bahadur Sastri and Mr G. L. Nanda were standing by the pyre. When a newspaper columnist expressed surprise at the disregard of Nehru's express wishes, one Hindu ignoramus wrote that in his will Nehru had wanted to be cremated, and since cremation was a Hindu rite, the Hindu ritual, too, was proper!

In his will Nehru also expressed the desire that a portion of his ashes should be thrown into the Ganges at Allahabad. Now, this is a Hindu practice, and Nehru feared that his wish might be interpreted as a concession to Hindu religious tenets. So, in his testament, he wrote a long explanation of his direction, in which he said that it had nothing to do with the Hindu religion, but was only a token of his loyalty to India's cultural inheritance, in which the Ganges was a symbol of the past of India, running into the present, and flowing on to the future. He added that he was a link in that chain, which he treasured and did not want to break. This extraordinary explanation shows how unaware Nehru was of the true reason for the worship of the Ganges by the Hindus: that it was not religious in the strict sense, but an expression of the loyalty to the Aryan *mos majorum*, that is, *his* reason precisely. The Government of India and his relatives went further and had portions of his ashes immersed in most sacred rivers of India.

Nehru also wished that the greater portion of his ashes should be scattered all over India from the air. This was done, but the gesture roused the anger of orthodox Hin-

dus. Dr Ram Manohar Lohia, Ph.D. (Berlin), Socialist leader, and member of the Indian parliament, declared at a public meeting:

Whatever Mr Nehru might have written in his will, whatever he might have said about his attitude towards religion, the fact remains that Mr Nehru was born a Hindu, he had his thread ceremony (*yajnopavit*) performed in the Hindu way, he lived a Hindu, died a Hindu, and was cremated according to Hindu rites. All his ashes should have been immersed.

The scattering of his ashes, Dr Lohia declared, was an unreligious act, and he added with unbelievable bad taste, 'Mr Nehru gave his ornaments to his family, and his ashes to the country.' One can only comment, '*Brevis omnis malitia super malitiam Indicorum.*'

Yet when I say that a Hindu is genetic in all his outlooks, the friends of India among Occidentals remark that I know nothing about Hinduism.

Epilogue

CIRCE'S TRIUMPH

They stood at the gate of the goddess with flowing tresses, and heard her, Circe, sweetly singing before her loom, as she walked to and fro weaving an imperishable web, gorgeous and dazzling, such as only goddesses can make.

So she lived on the island of Aeaea, and so she has in India. Men have stood at her gate, and called to be admitted, and to all she has opened her shining doors. She has taken them in, given them seats, and served food. But with the food she has also mixed the drug which makes them forget their country. Then she has turned them into brute beasts.

No invader who has come into her great continent has been able to resist her spell, and the British who broke it untimely and went home without first hearing the spirits of their dead heroes are still longing after her with the docility of cattle. The Americans are now crying out like Polites, 'Friends, there is somebody within singing sweetly, and the hall is echoing to her song. Come quickly, and cry aloud to her.'

I am the son of her ancient victims, and I have also had to be a victim myself. Those who have read my autobiography will recall that, so far as it is a personal story, it ends in despair, a very strange state of mind to be in for a young man of about twenty-two. 'It was', I wrote in the book, 'neither absinthe, nor lust, nor disease, nor remorse for some hideous suppressed crime, nor unrequited love which had brought me to this pass. My low spirits were absolute.'

I did not understand then what it was that was making me suffer, and I had not fully arrived at the truth even when I wrote those lines at the age of fifty. Now, of

course, I see that Circe had cast her spell on me quite early and done her worst by the time I was twenty. I am grateful to her for that, because by so doing she gave me the time to fight back. Had the spell been cast later, it would have led me, not even to suffering and despair which after all can give a man the desperation to save himself, but to stolidity which sees no meaning in a struggle.

I have indeed saved myself, though Hermes never gave me the drug moly. I had to fight alone for long years, and till about the last lap only defeat faced me, with everybody saying that the labour and the wounds were vain, and the enemy was neither fainting nor failing. Yet the memory of some past which I could not bring up to the surface of consciousness lurked within me and kept me struggling, until I remembered one day who and what I was. The notion that we Hindus were Europeans enslaved by a tropical country became a conviction when I paid a short visit of eight weeks to the West in 1955 at the age of fifty-seven.

Since then I have been preaching the idea day in, day out, *urbi et orbi*. To everybody who discusses the ills of India I say that there is no future for us Hindus unless we can recover at least our old European spirit, even if not the European body and pride of flesh. I apply this idea to the most matter-of-fact political and economic tasks facing us in India. For instance, when after my short visit to the West I was asked to speak before the Delhi School of Economics—you can guess the ancestry of the institution from the name alone, I told my audience that they could not hope to carry out the industrial revolution they had so much at heart except under three conditions:

1. Fully, under a re-imposed foreign domination, accompanied by a loss of political as well as economic freedom.

2. Partially, inefficiently, and very uneconomically, by continuing the present unnatural regime of Anglicized Hindus, which I call Brown Colonialism, and remaining de-

pendent on continued foreign training, money, supervision, and spoon-feeding.

3. Fully, naturally, and freely, by recovering our original European spirit and character, and conquering so far as we can the Indian environment.

I do not think that I have to declare in so many words what I stand for. For me there is only one course, and that the most difficult.

If I were to speak from the head alone I would say that there is no chance whatever for what I advocate. It will never be realized, nor even accepted as a programme. But man does not live by the head alone. He has a heart, and for the greater part of my life I have been witness to the suffering which foreign rule can create even when it confers good on the subject people. Knowing this I cannot contemplate another cycle of subjection for my people, though watching the doings of all those concerned, including our Government which is the blindest of all, I cannot see how the fatal drift can be arrested.* Even so I shall make a last attempt, in fact the present series of books which I may not live to complete is that. I say to myself that if I am to be a Cassandra let me at least be a positive Cassandra. So I get up among the victims of Circe and address them:

Friends, once comrades in a beastly fellowship! *Favete linguis.* Listen to a fellow-beast who has been lucky enough to find freedom and wants you to be free. See, Circe stands by and smiles mockingly. She thinks I cannot but fail. Demigoddess! You are boastful, and your chal-

* The following anticipation of the final goal of the fatal drift is to be found on p. 503 of my autobiography: 'Working within the emerging polity of the larger Europe, the Anglo-Saxon can be expected to lay claim to a special association with India on historical grounds. In plain words, I expect either the United States singly or a combination of the United States and the British Commonwealth to re-establish and rejuvenate the foreign domination of India.' These words were written in January, 1948, hardly six months after the attainment of political independence by India, and they were published in 1951. I hold by them.

lenge provoke me to be so. Remember that it might still be said—*Seipsam virtute, Indian exemplo.*

Now, fellow-beasts! Do not heed her. This is what you have to do to break her spell.

Cease to think of yourselves as Orientals, and never admit that there is any mental bond between you and true Asiatics.

Expel the thousands of Western mercenaries whom you pay with your blood and have got into the habit of looking up to as your stable-boys, cowherds, shepherds, and swineherds, because their governments throw a handful of fodder or food to you. What they are really doing is to continue your servitude to Circe. You kicked *at* Western mercenaries in distant Congo, why do you cherish them at home? Gore them and kick them out of your own land.

Say that we are Europeans in our own right, and we want no patronage. We shall take our destiny in our hands, create our life, and renovate our economy through our own strength, mental and physical.

And in a moment the pelt, the skin, and the fur will fall off your backs, and you will be free again.

At this there is wild commotion among the victims of Circe. The depraved ones among them come yelling at me, as if they could harm me, the Aryan *redivivus*. With a refinement of cruelty Circe has kept them in the human shape but in a form which is even more repulsive than that of the Yahoos of Swift. Swift made them scraggy and hideous, and in turning away from them a decent man could feel that he was being uncharitable to them for an ugliness over which they had no control and not for their moral ugliness. But no decency can be offended by turning away from the new Hindu Yahoos. They are all plump, sleek, solemn, and even smiling when out after self-interest. They have no ugliness which is not of their own making.

But why should I concern myself with them? I have rescued my European soul from Circe, to whom it was a kind of happiness to be in thrall. I have accomplished another feat which was more difficult. I have recovered my Ariel's body from Sycorax, the terrible and malevolent hag who stands behind Circe in India. So I can and should ignore the Yahoos. But I would save the fellow-beasts. They do not, however, listen to me. They honk, neigh, bellow, bleat, or grunt, and scamper away to their scrub, stable, byre, pen, and sty.

Tears now roll down the cheeks of Circe. The great sorceress weeps to see the completeness of her handiwork.